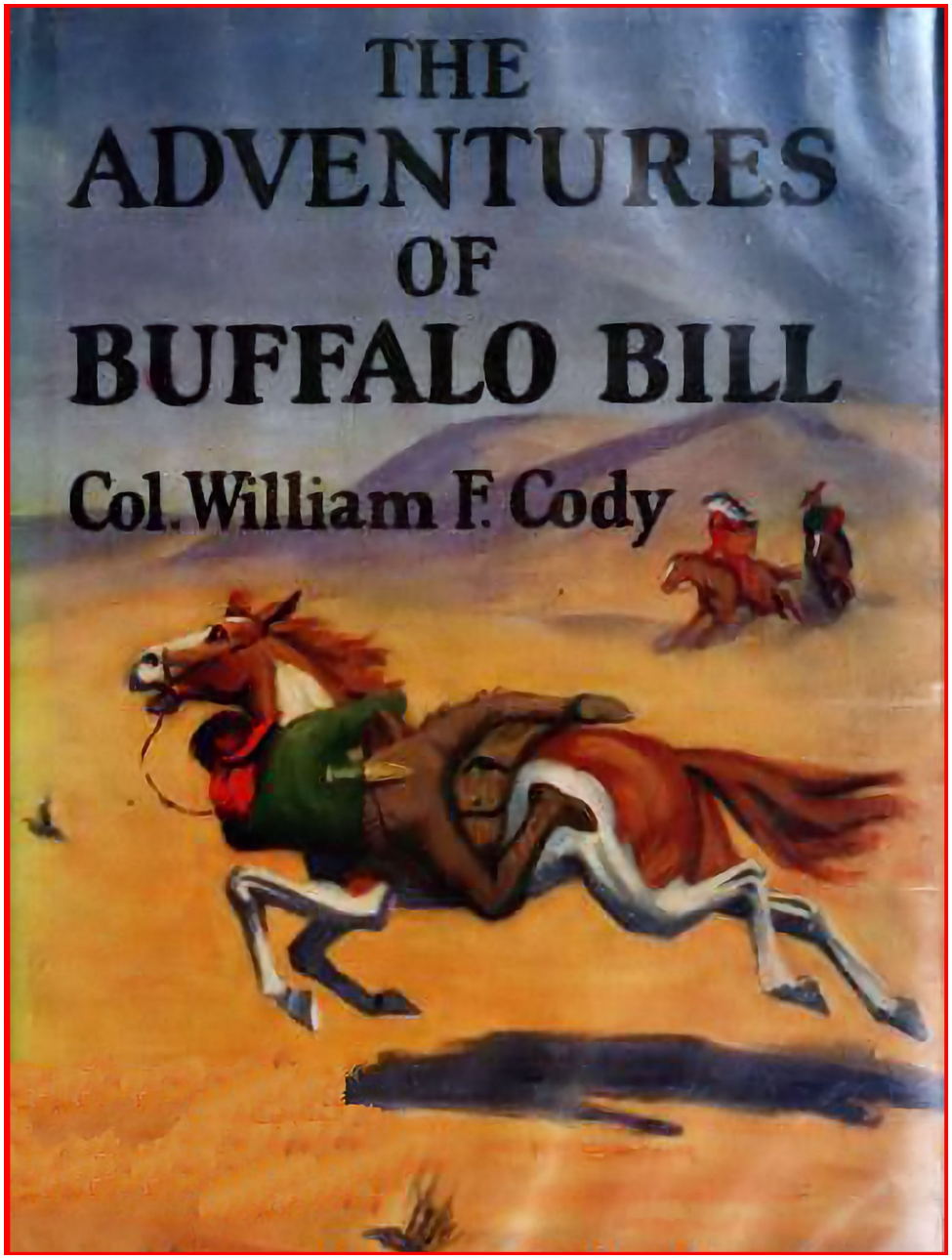

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
BUFFALO BILL
Col. William F. Cody

This is a biographical work
based on the public domain book
“The Adventures Of Buffalo Bill”
by Col. William F. Cody
with edits, notes, arrangement
and additional images
by Larry W Jones

Copyright 2022 © by Larry W Jones

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for quotations in a book review.

First edition - 2022

Book design by Larry W Jones

Published by lulu.com

ISBN – 978-1-387-76859-2

BUFFALO BILL
WHEN THE WEST WAS WILD

Introduction:

William Frederick Cody (February 26, 1846 – January 10, 1917), known as "Buffalo Bill", was an American soldier, bison hunter, and showman. He was born in Le Claire, Iowa Territory (now the U.S. state of Iowa), but he lived for several years in his father's hometown in modern-day Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, before the family returned to the Midwest and settled in the Kansas Territory.

Buffalo Bill started working at the age of eleven, after his father's death, and became a rider for the Pony Express at age 15. During the American Civil War, he served as a scout for the Union from 1863 to the end of the war in 1865. Later he served as a civilian scout for the US Army during the Indian Wars, receiving the Medal of Honor in 1872.

One of the most famous and well-known figures of the American Old West, Buffalo Bill's legend began to spread when he was only 23. Shortly thereafter he started performing in shows that displayed cowboy themes and episodes from the frontier and Indian Wars. He founded Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1883, taking his large company on tours in the United States and, beginning in 1887, in Great Britain and continental Europe.

The Little Boy of the Prairie

ONCE when Buffalo Bill was a tiny boy of seven or eight his father's family were camping on their way to Kansas. It happened that both his father and the guide were away from the little camp in search of food. It was at night and young Bill Cody was asleep. He was suddenly awakened by hearing a noise, and saw an Indian in the act of untying and leading away his own pet pony. The boy jumped up, grasped his rifle, and said,

"What are you doing with my horse?"

The Indian did not seem to be much disturbed at the little fellow's appearance, and said he would swap horses. Little Bill said he would not swap. The Indian only laughed at him. Then the boy held his gun ready, and said again that he would not swap; and in the end the big Indian, after watching him keenly for a few minutes, quietly mounted his old pony and rode away. This is an example of the nerve and courage which have made him as a grown man the noted plainsman in our history.

That was the time when a man saved his own life day by day, absolutely and solely because he had greater courage or quicker wit than his opponent, whether that opponent was an Indian, a stage robber, a flood, a prairie fire, or any other form confronted. To understand those days and the events and episodes as they occurred to the men who lived them, one must first get into one's mind the country they lived in and traveled over. It was a flat land stretching thousands of miles across the middle of the United States from the Missouri River to California, with here and there a huge range of mountains running north and south, guarded on either side by long lines of foothills. Sometimes there were stretches of forest; generally there was nothing but the flat plains covered with a rough wild grass. Between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada there were the alkali plains, unfit for human habitation. All this country was inhabited by Indians who had been gradually driven westward from the Atlantic coast, who had been treated badly by white men, and who had become a fierce race of fighters and hunters. They considered the white man their natural prey. Whenever they saw a "pale face" it was fair and right in their minds to try to get his scalp; for hundreds of stories had been handed down from their fathers and grandfathers of the way in which the white man had killed their people and driven them from the land that had been theirs for centuries.

Over this country—a distance of two thousand miles—the buffaloes and the Indians roamed, and no white man had a home. There were no cities. There were practically no towns. The white man gradually moving west had got as far as the western counties of Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa in 1850; the white men had settled the Pacific coast in California; there were no railroads; there was no way to communicate between the Missouri River and California, except on horseback or by driving huge wagons across these wild plains.

Any day, any moment, while the travelers were sitting in their great wagons, they might see some little specks coming toward them across the flat plain. Then came a scurrying to put the wagons in a circle with the horses and mules, men and women, in the center. In a moment a band of mounted Indians would rush down upon them; and unless they were ready these men would ride through the train between the wagons, frighten the mules and horses, separate one wagon from another, and after killing the travellers, carry their goods away. Sometimes it happened in the night. Sometimes it happened in the day. The result was that those who lived and traveled across those plains were the keenest and shrewdest of their kind. Even if the Indians did not appear, it took a good hunter to keep his little caravan supplied with food. For the journey was a long one; there were many breakdowns and delays; and in order to supply food for the company, the buffalo and deer of the plains had to be hunted.

That was the country and the people between 1850 and 1860. After the rush to California for gold, it became evident that there must be some regular system of communication between the outskirts of civilization in the East, and the outskirts of civilization in the West in California. It was just at this time that the man who is known all over the world as Buffalo Bill was born.

Buffalo Bill's father was named Isaac Cody. He lived on a farm in Scott County, Iowa, near a town named Le Clair, and there William Frederick Cody was born on the 26th of February, 1846.

When the California gold craze came in 1849, Isaac Cody, with thousands of other people, made up his mind to go across the plains to California and look for gold. But before he had much more than started he changed his mind and moved toward Kansas, where he hoped to find some place to settle on the frontier. Instead of taking his wife and children on such a dangerous expedition he left them with his brother, Elijah Cody, in Platt County, Missouri, and then started out in search of a new home. Finally, when young William was only seven or eight years old, his father settled near Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and here the boy grew up in the midst of Indians and the wild life of the plains, and in the very thick of the early fights that occurred between the Northerners and Southerners over the question of slavery. It was a hard life and only those who were naturally fitted for it lived through it. Even at the age of seven or eight little Bill Cody naturally took to this sort of life.

He loved adventure. He loved stories of Indians, scouts, and desperadoes, and he could fire a rifle pretty accurately almost as soon as he could carry one.

Finally the family settled in Salt Creek Valley in Kansas, which was on the line of one of the two trails, or roads—if they could be called roads—that stretched for two thousand miles or more across this waste of plain and mountain to California.

Day after day little Bill Cody would go out with his father, taking his rifle, to hunt, and he always had with him a famous dog named "Turk." The boy, and in fact all the children, loved Turk. He was as much one of the family as any of the children, and again and again gave warning of danger. There are many instances in which the dog practically saved the lives of at least one member of the family group. One day when Cody's two sisters were walking some distance from their home they heard a snarl, and looking up into a tree they saw a panther getting ready to spring upon them. Old Turk, who was with them, was quite as well aware of the danger as they were; and while they hid in the bushes, he sat in front of them and grappled with the panther as it jumped to reach them. The whole incident took place in a moment, and before they realized what had happened, they saw their favorite dog in the act of being killed by the panther. Suddenly off in the distance they heard their brother Bill's familiar whistle calling his dog. Then on the instant, as they crouched there, expecting every moment to see the fight end with the death of the dog, a rifle shot rang out and the panther rolled over dead. That was a famous shot in itself for a boy of less than eight years, for both animals were rolling over and over in their fight, and it took not only nerve, but accurate aim, to hit the one and avoid the other.

The family had scarcely got settled in their new home when the father, who did not believe in slavery, got into discussions with other people of the county who had been brought up to hold slaves. Those were hard, dangerous men. They got angry quickly; they shot their pistols at one another without much provocation, and they feared neither death nor anything else because they were living in the midst of danger always. In one of these excited discussions as to whether slaves should be held in the new State of Kansas or not, Isaac Cody took a firm stand on his side, and was thereupon notified that if he did not leave the country he would be shot. He had to hide frequently in different parts of his own house at night when a body of men would come to kill him, and for days and days he lived in thickets near the house, his little son bringing him food every day.

Once when a party had come to the house in search of his father and had failed to find him, young Bill discovered that his pony was missing. He went out to look for it, and found that it had been stolen by a member of the lynching party named Sharp. He cried out to the man that that was his pony; whereupon the desperado laughed at him. Bill called him a coward and told

him he would get even with him some day; and then suddenly getting an idea, he whistled for Turk, and set the dog on the man. The dog ran up to the pony and bit his hind legs, whereupon the little horse kicked vigorously and bucked until he had thrown Sharp off. Then began a hot discussion between Will and Sharp, the one setting the dog on, the other yelling to have him called off. But in the end Sharp was obliged to temporize. He returned the pony and went away as fast as he could run.

So the days went on until Isaac Cody was obliged to leave the country. One of the famous scout's first real adventures occurred at this time. The boy was scarcely ten years old when one night the family received information that their father was coming home to see them and to stay for one night, returning to Fort Leavenworth in the morning. In some way the men of the community discovered that he was coming. A party was sent out to capture him as he came through a wooded gulch, and the little family sat around the hearth, most of them in tears, with the certainty that their father would be killed that night.

Then the instinct of the young scout came to the surface. Young Bill proposed that he should ride his pony to a place called Grasshopper Falls, where his father was staying, and warn him. The boy had been sick with a fever; but he got out of bed, mounted his pony, and started in the night to ride the thirty miles. He had only gone four or five when he heard a cry of, "Halt!" Instead of stopping, he leaned over Indian fashion behind his pony, so that nothing but one leg showed on the side from which the call came, and there he hung as the good horse rushed at his top speed through the ambuscade. As he did not stop, the men began firing at him, and he could hear the bullets flying over him. He got through safely, however, and succeeded in getting to Grasshopper Falls just as his father was starting. It is interesting to know that this ride taken in the night by a sick boy not old enough to go to school was ten miles longer than the famous ride of General Philip Sheridan in the Civil War.

Then came hard times for the little Cody family. The father died, and the mother had no means of supporting her children and keeping up the farm. Young Bill, then eleven years old, made up his mind that it was his duty to support them. He could not stay at home, as he was not big enough to attend to the work of the farm.

It seemed an almost impossible task, because in addition to all their poverty there was a mortgage of one thousand dollars against their farm, and if they did not pay this shortly their own home would be taken away from them. Mrs. Cody was a brave woman, and she felt that if it were not for that mortgage she could have managed to scrape along and keep the family alive. In the many talks which they had as to what they should do, the boy told his mother that if she could fight this claim he would try to earn the money.

This was his idea. There was a firm—a famous one in the history of that part of the United States—named Russell, Majors & Waddell, frontiersmen who had gradually built up a line of freight wagons that went from St. Joseph, Missouri, to San Francisco, two thousand miles across the plains and mountains, carrying the freight that was shipped from the East to the West and bringing back freight from California to the East.

(**Note)** *Russell, Majors and Waddell, business partnership formed by William Hepburn Russell, Alexander Majors, and William Bradford Waddell that operated the most prominent freight, mail, and passenger transportation company in the United States in the mid-19th century and, most famously, established the Pony Express mail service (1860–61).*

These goods were packed in huge wagons with big canvas tops, drawn by sometimes ten and sometimes twenty teams of oxen. There was so much danger in these trips from Indians and outlaws that they never started without several wagons in a little caravan, with a guard of frontiersmen all armed and ready to repel any attack from whatever source. Each night they camped in certain places along the trail where there was water and, if possible, wood. They cooked their own meals. They set up their pickets and guards, and started on again in the morning to the next camp. The journey took about a month; and time and time again the whole outfit would fail to appear at the other end. It had been attacked and all the men killed by Indians or by the robbers of the plains. And sometimes the next caravan would find the remnants of the wagons and the dead bodies of men and oxen. It was Bill Cody's idea to see if he could not get a chance to travel as what is called an "extra" on one of these caravans, and forthwith he presented himself at the office of the firm in Fort Leavenworth. One of the members of the firm had known his father, and so he treated the boy kindly. But he told him frankly that a boy of his age would be of no use.

Bill, however, said that he could ride and shoot, that he could herd cattle and do a lot of other things. He wanted to be an “extra.” Finally, he was so earnest in his desire, that Mr. Majors consented; and there is an interesting document which was signed by the two which shows what was expected and what were the dangers of such work. This paper reads as follows:

“I, Wm. F. Cody, do hereby solemnly swear before the great and living God, that during my engagement with, and while I am in the employ of, Russell, Majors & Waddell, I will not, under any circumstances, use profane language, that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employé of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and shall direct all my acts so as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God.”

And so the “boy extra” began his work. At night he slept in a blanket under a wagon, and by day he did whatever he was given to do.

Day after day, week after week, they traveled slowly over the huge plains, the “bull whackers”—the men who drove the huge oxen—constantly snapping their enormous whips and urging the beasts on as fast as possible. They had gone only about thirty-five miles from Fort Kearny, one of the places where they stopped near the Platte River, when young Bill suddenly saw the three pickets drop flat on the ground, and the next moment he heard shots and saw a band of Indians riding toward them. Instantly the men in the bull train—all frontiersmen—made a circle of the wagons, got into the circle themselves, and began firing at the Indians. The red men wheeled in a big curve, firing as they went, and then rode off a short distance on the plain out of gun shot and stood watching the white men. The consultation which the men had while the Indians waited proved that it was useless to stay where they were. Indians began to come from all quarters and outnumbered the whites ten to one. It was therefore decided to leave the train to the mercy of the Indians and make a dash for a creek where they could hide behind the embankment. This was successfully carried out and they then started for Fort Kearny, walking in the water and keeping watch over the top of the bank. As night came on the little boy began to get tired and weak. He could not keep up with the others, and in the excitement and darkness they did not miss him as he gradually fell behind. So the little fellow was trudging along, his rifle over his shoulder, perhaps a hundred yards behind the party, when to his amazement he saw the feathered head of an Indian poke over the bank before him and behind the others of his party. The Indian did not see him, for he was looking toward the others. With the quickness and instinct which made Buffalo Bill what he was, the lad put up his rifle, and the first warning his friends had of any attack in the rear was the sound of a shot, and the sound, too, of the body of the dead Indian rolling down into the creek. That was Buffalo Bill’s first killing of a human, and the story of the boy who had saved the bull train went all over the frontier country in an incredibly short space of time.

He saw the feathered head of an Indian

Little Bill at School and at the Traps

NOW began days of trouble for the young frontier boy. The family difficulties were not so serious as they had seemed at first. Mrs. Cody was able to keep the farm, and realizing that her boy, while promising to make a good frontiersman, was not getting any education, she showed him the necessity of having the “man of the family” go to school.

Near their home some of the settlers had contributed money for the building of a little schoolhouse and for the payment of a teacher who was to come from the East and teach their children. Mrs. Cody made up her mind that Bill should go there to school, and after much discussion he began his school days.

Those must have been strange school days as we think of school now. The little one-room shanty on the plain had nothing in it but a few boards of the simplest kind that would serve as desks, a stove, and a few, very few, books. The scholars were a wild lot, quite unused to any kind of discipline. There was no idea in their minds of promptness, of getting to school on time, of behaving while they were in school, or of studying very hard over their lessons. In fact, their parents had had very little education, and there was nothing in all that country that made people believe in any discipline. Then, too, the teacher was not a very good one. In fact, it would have been hard to get a man to go out on that wild frontier who could make a living in the East. So the school was a somewhat uproarious affair. The boys had numerous fights. They came when they liked. They went hunting or fishing as they saw fit. They got a good many beatings from the teacher and laughed over them afterward. They teased the girls, and again and again the school teacher, unable to cope with them, settled matters by driving them out of the little house and locking the door.

In the midst of this crowd of youngsters young Bill began his first day. He was known to them all and to all their parents for miles around as the boy who had saved the bull train, as a fine shot, and as a good deal of a hero. Besides this he was a terrible tease, not only to his own sisters, but to every one else’s sisters. Not many days had passed when a feud grew up between him and another boy of the school. This soon developed into fights, finally ending in the arrival of old Turk at the school. The school, like all other houses, had no cellar. It rested a foot or two above the ground.

Bill's rival in the school was a boy named Gobel, and he, too, owned a dog. When Turk arrived in search of his young master the school was in session, and a moderate amount of order had been maintained for some time. Then suddenly the scholars and the teacher heard beneath them a fierce growl, then another, then a series of howls and cries. And everyone knew that within a few inches of them, only separated by the floor, there was a dogfight in progress. That was enough for the scholars. They jumped over their seats, crowded out through the door, and stood around the schoolhouse watching Turk and Gobel's dog fight. Each dog was urged on by one of the two factions. It was not long before Turk had beaten his rival and driven him away with his tail between his legs. Whereupon young Gobel said that although his dog might be beaten, he could lick Will Cody. That was enough for the young frontier boy, and, in spite of all the teacher could do, a ring was soon formed by the scholars and a thoroughbred prize fight started. Gobel was much larger and older than Will, and the latter knew that he would be beaten shortly. He must resort to some stratagem, and though it seems strange to us now, out on that frontier, and especially to a boy who had actually been obliged to kill men to save his own life, any means of winning the fight was right. So the little fellow thinking all the time while he was in the midst of his struggle, drew his knife and stuck it into the fleshy part of Steve Gobel's leg. The moment Steve saw the blood he screamed with terror and cried out that he was killed.

Thereupon all the children took to their heels and ran to tell their parents that Will Cody had killed Gobel. Then the teacher took a hand, and so did the parents of many of the children, and it looked as if it would go hard with poor Bill. At all events, he did not care to stay at home, and not knowing what else to do, he ran away down the trail, happening to come upon one of the wagon trains of his first employers, Russell, Majors & Waddell, as he ran. The boss of the outfit was a man named Willis, and when the boy told his story Willis promised to look after him and take him again as a boy extra, first offering to go back to the school with him and lick Gobel, and the teacher too, if Bill said so. It was only a few moments when Gobel's father and a couple of men came up to arrest the boy, but they had to deal with men who were used to that sort of thing every day of their lives, and the pursuers soon discovered that it was wise for them to turn around and go home. But there was no more school for young Cody at present, and so he again became a member of a bull train.

During this short term of service with the freighters the boy had another experience which nearly ended his career, and which to any boy who lives in a pleasant home and never sees any such life can scarcely be much more than a fairy tale, it is so terrible and seems so impossible. The boy had a short time with nothing to do between trips in the winter, and he decided, as money was necessary, to go on a hunting trip with a party of trappers. There was a chance of making considerable money by trapping animals and selling their furs. As a matter of fact, the trapping was very successful, and young Bill contributed

distinctly his part to the family treasury. It was in the midst of this trip, while he was in an absolutely uninhabited country, making a round of his traps, that he came upon three Indians, each leading a pony loaded with skins. It was a case of three to one, and the moment he discovered them they discovered him. He saw the leading Indian put up his rifle and aim it at him. Here was a case, one of the many that came later, when the young frontier boy unquestionably saved his life by his own quickness and skill. Actually before the Indian, who was no greenhorn at such matters, could aim his rifle and fire, Will Cody had shot him dead. The other two Indians fired arrows, one of which went through the boy's hat; but without stopping, he turned around and cried, as if to his companions:

"Here they are! This way! This way!"

And then—all this taking place in an incredibly short space of time—he wounded one Indian with his revolver as the two turned and fled; so that, instead of being killed himself, he killed one, wounded another, overcame the third, and marched into camp with their three ponies and all the skins that they had gathered.

It was on a similar trapping expedition that the following episode occurred. The boy had been so successful and had made so much money that he decided on another trip. Not finding any party of men starting out, he got up an expedition of his own with a friend of his named David Phillips. The two youngsters bought an ox-team wagon and started out. They were after beaver, and when they were somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth they struck a country full of beaver dams.

Here they camped in a cave in the hillside which they fixed up for a permanent home. They stored the food they had brought and went to work setting their traps. At every hour of the day and night they were likely to run upon Indians, who never waited to parley, but killed whatever white men they saw as soon as they came upon them, scalping them and leaving them dead or dying wherever they might have fallen.

These two boys, therefore, were constantly on the watch. Every bush, every tree, every rock, might conceal an Indian, and by practicing this instinct, just as a sailor on a ship will see a sail that anyone else might think was a cloud or a speck on the horizon, these boys of the plains could discover, in a range of many miles over plain or rolling country, the slightest thing that was unusual or unexplainable. A little spot of color in a tree or bush that was not exactly the color of a winter leaf would mean to them an ambuscade of Indians. The slightest impression in the earth which was different from impressions left there by nature meant the trail of a party of Indians. Every instant while they were moving along in the day or night their eyes were roaming over the country round about to pick out any one of these tiny but unusual signs.

The boys had been attending to their work of trapping for many days without seeing any unusual sign. One night they came to their camp and had eaten supper, when their oxen began to bellow and leap about. The boys grabbed their rifles, ran to the corral, and discovered that a bear was in the vicinity. Phillips fired first and wounded the animal. But that only made him the more savage. The boy just managed to leap out of the bear's way when Bill fired into his mouth and killed him. But it was a close call, as the dead beast fell actually on the body of Phillips. It was a case of having saved the boy's life, and the chance of returning the favor came only too soon.

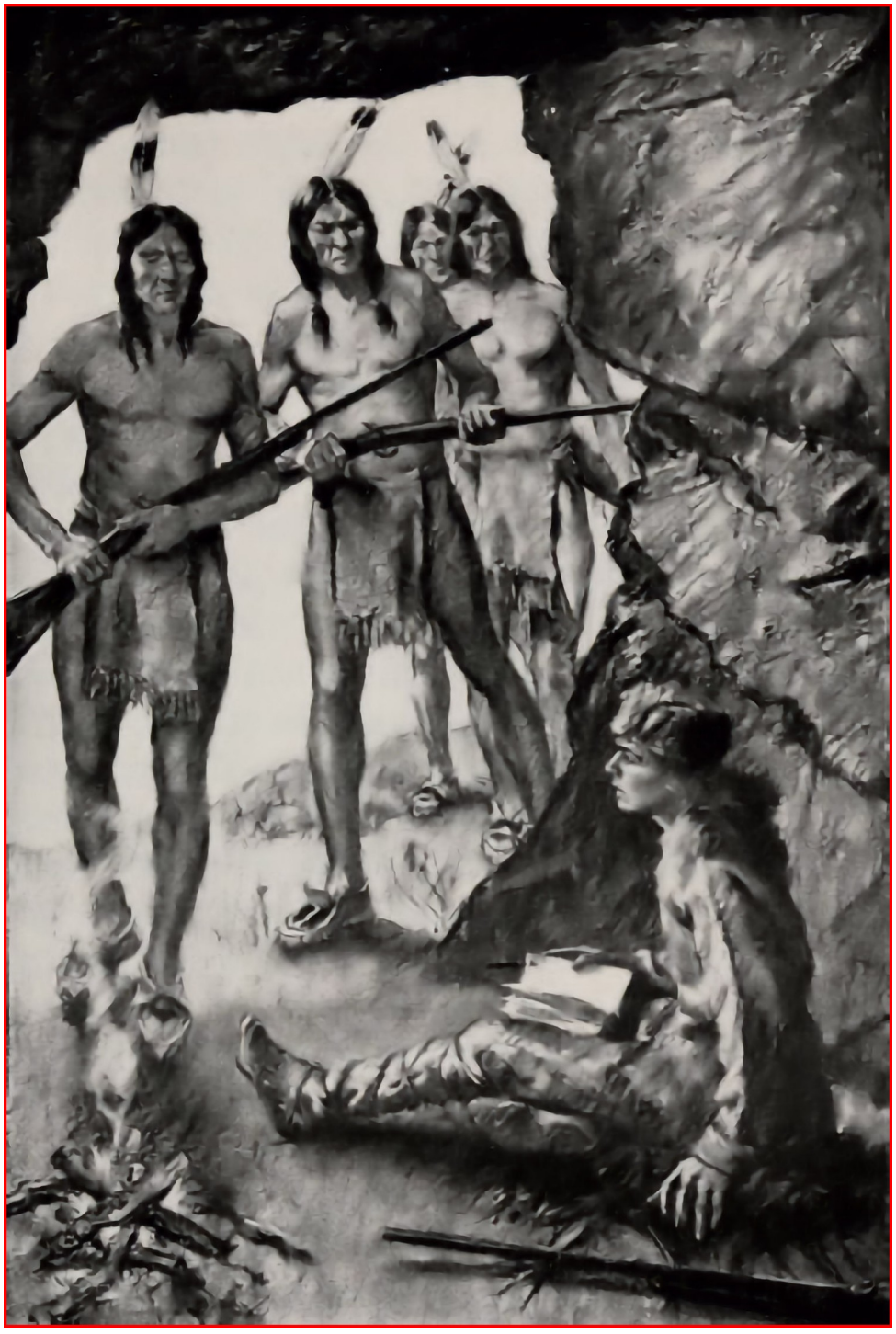
It was the next day, when Bill Cody slipped and broke his leg. The other boy carried him back to the camp, made splints, bound up his leg, and stopped the bleeding; and then the two sat down to decide what should be done. The nearest settlement was a hundred miles away. It was absolutely impossible for Cody to walk that distance. His friend could not carry him, and in the fright which the bear had given the two oxen, one had killed itself, and the other had become so maimed that it had to be shot. What the youngsters were to do they did not know.

No one was nearer than a hundred miles, and there was no way of getting a boy with a broken leg that distance. Yet it was a case of starving to death or of doing something at once. Therefore the two trappers, hardly fourteen years old, decided that Phillips should start at once and walk the hundred miles for assistance.

To go and come back would take him twenty days at least. That meant twenty days lying in a cave for Bill, without his having the power even to get up and go outside. Yet there was nothing else to do, and the good nerve of the two boys was sufficient for the occasion.

Phillips made Cody as comfortable as he could and put all the food they had near him. They figured out just how much he was to eat each day in order to hold out until assistance should be brought, and then shaking hands, Phillips left him.

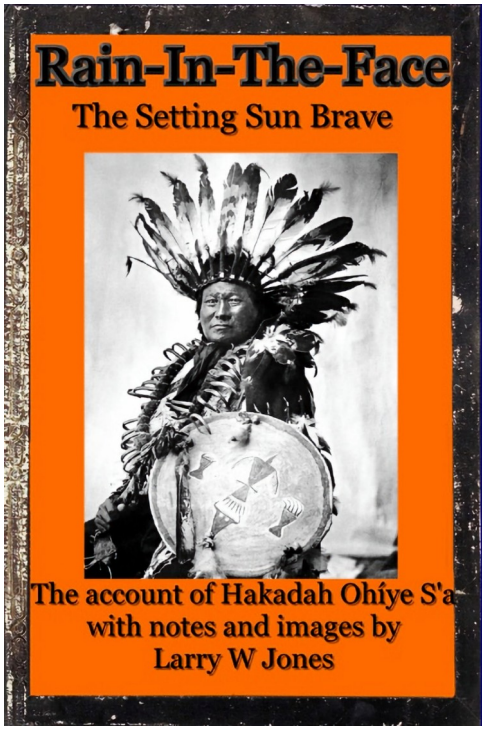
The poor boy felt too lonely and heartbroken to eat much of anything in the first day or two. He counted the days as they passed by cutting a notch in a stick of wood each day. Gradually his leg healed, and in the course of two weeks he could move about a little. That alone relieved the pressure of loneliness, for hobbling to the mouth of the cave and looking outside was a very different thing from lying perfectly still in one position day after day. He tried to use up some of the time by studying the school books which his mother had asked him to take with him, and it was in the midst of one of these attempts to pass away the hours by reading over again what he had already read a dozen times, that he looked up and saw an Indian in war paint standing inside the cave gazing at him.



In a moment a dozen or more warriors had followed the first. The boy thought his last day had come, for the delay that had occurred already was a longer time than the Indians usually gave any white man to live if they were in a position to put him out of existence. The chief in his guttural tones, without changing his expression at all, said: “How?”

Bill said: “How?” and then they looked at one another, the boy’s mind flying along all the possible schemes which an expert frontiersman could think of to prolong a discussion that might possibly save his life. As he was thinking, gazing thus at the Indians one after another, he suddenly recognized one of them who was a chief named Rain-in-the-Face, an Indian whom he had once befriended in a way that the red man appreciates.

(**Note**) *Rain-in-the-Face (c. 1835 – September 15, 1905) was a warchief of the Lakota tribe of Native Americans. His mother was a Dakota related to the band of famous Chief Inkpaduta. He possibly was the one who killed George Armstrong Custer and helped defeat the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment at the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn. See the book "Rain-In-The-Face - The Setting Sun Brave" by Larry W Jones. ISBN* – 9781716257728



It seems that once, some time before, Bill had found the man in difficulty and had given him something to eat and a blanket to sleep in. Instantly the boy’s mind, well aware of the peculiar kind of gratitude Indians feel, began to work upon this. First he showed his leg and the bandages and told the story of his mishap, gaining as much time as he could in that way. Then suddenly he turned to Rain-in-the-Face and reminded him of how once their positions had been exactly reversed and how he had helped the Indian to get what he most needed. Rain-in-the-Face remembered the episode perfectly, and after a consultation he told Cody that although he and his friends were out in search of scalps, they would not molest him, but that that was the limit of their kindness.

The Indians ransacked the cave, took everything that was of value from it, leaving only a small amount of food. And yet after they were gone the boy was so thankful for the chance that had thrown this one Indian in his way and had saved his life that he could not even complain of the starvation which stared

him in the face. He took what little food was left and divided it up, allowing ten days beyond the twenty for the return of Phillips, and kept strictly to the portion each day that would keep him in some sort of food until the thirty days were up.

A day or two after the episode of the Indians a heavy snowstorm set in, and lasted for so long that when it finally ceased the mouth of the cave was entirely covered with snow. That seemed almost the last straw, for little or no light came into the cave, the cold was intense, and the boy was unable to go out. Hour by hour, day in and day out, he sat there, unable to read any more and without any appetite for the little food he could allow himself.

Three weeks passed—one day over the time in which Phillips might have returned. The little fellow's mind almost gave way from the strain that was put on him as he sat there with night following day, and no change—only expectancy.

Twenty-eight days passed. He had but a day or so more of food. If help did not come within the next three days at the most, he would starve to death. To add to his misery, most of the wood that had been left was used up.

So the boy sat on the twenty-ninth day, huddled over the little flame that he could spare himself, hardly realizing now the passage of time, when he suddenly heard his name called. It seemed to him that he must be dreaming. He sat perfectly still listening, unable even to make a reply, and then the name rang out again and was repeated time after time. With all the strength he had left he answered the call, and it was his answering cry that enabled Phillips and the relief party to find the cave and begin digging through the snow.

When the two boys came together Bill Cody's nerves gave way and he was carried out more dead than alive. But he was alive and bound to have many more of these hairbreadth escapes that make perhaps as extraordinary a record as could be told of any man who has ever lived.

These adventures, which read to-day as if they came out of a wild, unreal story of adventure, happening as they did in the life of this boy not yet fifteen years old, prepared the way for a youth and early manhood of such extraordinary usefulness to the plains that Cody by the time the Civil War came was one of the most expert frontiersmen, guides, and scouts that existed in the United States. And yet in 1860 he was but fifteen years old, too young, in other words, to go to college to-day, younger than most boys now when they get their first shotgun or rifle.

Crossing the Plains – Bill Cody's Own Account

IN the early settlement of Kansas common-school advantages were denied us, and to provide a means for educating the few boys and girls in the neighborhood of my home, a subscription school was started in a small log cabin that was built on the bank of a creek that ran near our house. My mother took great interest in this school, and at her persuasion I returned home and became enrolled as a pupil, where I made satisfactory progress until, as the result of a quarrel with a schoolmate, I left the town and started across the plains with one of Russell, Majors & Waddell's freight trains.

The trip proved a most enjoyable one to me, although no incidents worthy of note occurred on the way. On my return from Fort Kearny I was paid off the same as the rest of the employés. The remainder of the summer and fall I spent in herding cattle and working for Russell, Majors & Waddell.

In May, 1857, I started for Salt Lake City with a herd of beef cattle, in charge of Frank and Bill McCarthy, for General Albert Sidney Johnston's army, which was then being sent across the plains to fight the Mormons.

Nothing occurred to interrupt our journey until we reached Plum Creek, on the South Platte River, thirty-five miles west of old Fort Kearny. We had made a morning drive, and had camped for dinner. The wagon masters and a majority of the men had gone to sleep under the mess wagons. The cattle were being guarded by three men, and the cook was preparing dinner. No one had any idea that Indians were anywhere near us. The first warning we had that they were in that part of the country was the firing of shots and the whoops and yells from a party of them, who, catching us napping, gave us a most unwelcome surprise. All the men jumped to their feet and seized their guns. They saw with astonishment the cattle running in every direction, they having been stampeded by the Indians, who had shot and killed the three men who were on day herd duty, and were now charging down upon the rest of us.

The McCarthy boys, at the proper moment, gave orders to fire upon the advancing enemy. The volley checked them, although they returned the compliment, and shot one of our party through the leg. Frank McCarthy then sang out, "Boys, make a break for the slough yonder, and we can then have the bank for a breastwork."

We made a run for the slough, which was only a short distance off, and succeeded in safely reaching it, bringing with us the wounded man. The bank proved to be a very effective breastwork, affording us good protection. We had been there but a short time when Frank McCarthy, seeing that the longer we were corralled the worse it would be for us, said, "Well, boys, we'll try to make our way back to Fort Kearny by wading in the river and keeping the bank for a breastwork."

We all agreed that this was the best plan, and we accordingly proceeded down the river several miles in this way, managing to keep the Indians at a safe distance with our guns, until the slough made a junction with the main Platte River. From there down we found the river at times quite deep, and in order to carry the wounded man along with us, we constructed a raft of poles for his accommodation, and in this way he was transported.

Occasionally the water would be too deep for us to wade, and we were obliged to put our weapons on the raft and swim. The Indians followed us pretty closely, and were continually watching for an opportunity to get a good range and give us a raking fire. Covering ourselves by keeping well under the bank, we pushed ahead as rapidly as possible, and made pretty good progress, the night finding us still on the way and our enemies yet on our track.

I, being the youngest and smallest of the party, became somewhat tired, and, without noticing it, I had fallen behind the others for some little distance. It was about ten o'clock, and we were keeping very quiet and hugging close to the bank, when I happened to look up to the moonlit sky and saw the plumed head of an Indian peeping over the bank. Instead of hurrying ahead and alarming the men in a quiet way, I instantly aimed my gun at his head and fired.

The report rang out sharp and loud on the night air, and was immediately followed by an Indian whoop, and the next moment about six feet of dead Indian came tumbling into the river. I was not only overcome with astonishment, but was badly scared, as I could hardly realize what I had done. I expected to see the whole force of Indians come down upon us. While I was standing thus bewildered, the men, who had heard the shot and the war whoop, and had seen the Indian take a tumble, came rushing back.

“Who fired that shot?” cried Frank McCarthy. “I did,” replied I, rather proudly, as my confidence returned, and I saw the men coming up.

“Yes, and little Billy has killed an Indian stone dead—too dead to skin,” said one of the men, who had approached nearer than the rest, and had almost stumbled upon the Indian. From that time forward I became a hero and an Indian-killer. This was, of course, the first Indian I had ever shot, and as I was not then more than eleven years of age, my exploit created quite a sensation.

The other Indians, upon learning what had happened to their advance, fired several shots without effect, but which hastened our retreat down the river. We reached Fort Kearny just as the reveille was being sounded, bringing the wounded man with us. After the peril through which we had passed, it was a relief to feel that once more I was safe after such a dangerous initiation.

Frank McCarthy immediately reported to the commanding officer and informed him of all that had happened. The commandant at once ordered a company of cavalry and one of infantry to proceed to Plum Creek on a forced march, taking a howitzer with them—to endeavor to recapture the cattle from the Indians.

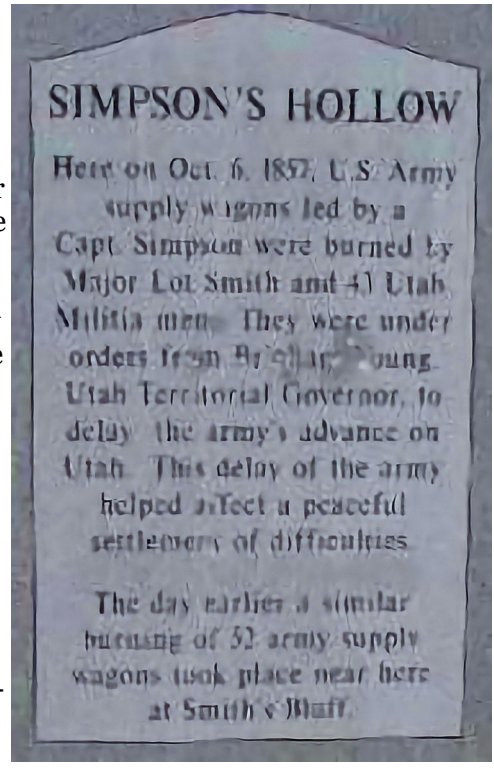
The firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell had a division agent at Kearny, and this agent mounted us on mules so that we could accompany the troops. On reaching the place where the Indians had surprised us, we found the bodies of the three men, whom they had killed and scalped and literally cut into pieces. We of course buried the remains. We caught but few of the cattle, most of them having been driven off and stampeded with the buffaloes, there being numerous immense herds of the latter in that section of the country at the time.

The Indians’ trail was discovered running south toward the Republican River, and the troops followed it to the head of Plum Creek, and there abandoned it, returning to Fort Kearny without having seen a single Indian.

The company’s agent, seeing that there was no further use for us in that vicinity—as we had lost our cattle and mules—sent us back to Fort Leavenworth. The company, it is proper to state, did not have to stand the loss of the expedition, as the government held itself responsible for such depredations by the Indians.

On the day that I got into Leavenworth, some time in July, I was interviewed for the first time in my life by a newspaper reporter, and the next morning I found my name in print as “the youngest Indian-slayer on the plains.” I am candid enough to admit that I felt very much elated over this notoriety. Again and again I read with eager interest the long and sensational account of our adventure. My exploit was related in a very graphic manner, and for a long time afterward I was considerable of a hero.

In the following summer, Russell, Majors & Waddell entered upon a contract with the government for General Albert Sidney Johnston's army that was sent against the Mormons. A large number of teams and teamsters were required for the purpose, and as the route was considered a dangerous one, men were not easily engaged for the service, though the pay was forty dollars a month in gold. An old wagon master named Lew Simpson, one of the best that ever commanded a bull train, was upon the point of starting with about ten wagons for the company, direct for Salt Lake, and as he had known me for some time as an ambitious youth, requested me to accompany him as an extra hand. My duties would be light, and, in fact, I would have nothing to do, unless some one of the drivers became sick, in which case I would be required to take his place. But even more seductive than this inducement was the promise that I should be provided with a mule of my own to ride, and be subject to the orders of no one save Simpson himself.



As a matter of interest to the general reader, it may be well to give a brief description of a freight train. The wagons used in those days by Russell, Majors & Waddell were known as the "J. Murphy wagons," made at St. Louis especially for the plains business. They were very large and very strongly built, being capable of carrying seven thousand pounds of freight each. The wagon boxes were very commodious, being about as large as the rooms of an ordinary house, and were covered with two heavy canvas sheets to protect the merchandise from the rain. These wagons were generally sent out from Leavenworth, each loaded with six thousand pounds of freight, and each drawn by several yoke of oxen in charge of one driver. A train consisted of twenty-five wagons, all in charge of one man, who was known as the wagon master. The second man in command was the assistant wagon master. Then came the "extra hand," next the night herder, and lastly the cavayard driver, whose duty it was to drive the loose and lame cattle. There were thirty-one men all told in a train. The men did their own cooking, being divided into messes of seven. One man cooked, another brought wood and water, another stood guard, and so on, each having some duty to perform while getting meals. All were heavily armed with Colt's pistols and Mississippi yagers, and every one always had his weapons handy so as to be prepared for any emergency.

*(**Note**) Joseph Murphy arrived in America from Ireland when he was thirteen, arriving in St. Louis where he apprenticed with a wagon-maker to learn the trade. He was a good student, learning how to judge the quality of the lumber just by the feel of the grain. He also learned how to build a quality wagon. Soon, he went into business for himself and in 1827 he sold his first wagon to a Santa Fe trader. It would be the first of many he would build for the trade. In time Murphy became the dominant wagon maker on the Santa Fe Trail. It's believed his company built some 200,000 wagons, extending into the twentieth century.*

J. Murphy Freight Wagon

The wagon master, in the language of the plains, was called the "bull-wagon boss"; the teamsters were known as "bull-whackers"; and the whole train was denominated a "bull outfit." Everything at that time was called an "outfit." The men of the plains were always full of a droll humor and exciting stories of their own experiences, and many an hour I spent in listening to the recitals of thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes.

The trail to Salt Lake ran through Kansas northwestwardly, crossing the Big Blue River, then over the Big and Little Sandy, coming into Nebraska near the Big Sandy. The next stream of any importance was the Little Blue, along which the trail ran for sixty miles, then crossed a range of sand hills, and struck the Platte River ten miles below Fort Kearny; thence the course lay up

the South Platte to the old Ash Hollow Crossing; thence eighteen miles across to the North Platte, near the mouth of the Blue Water, where General Harney had his great battle in 1855 with the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians.

From this point the North Platte was followed, passing Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, and Scott's Bluffs, and then on to Fort Laramie, where the Laramie River was crossed. Still following the North Platte for some considerable distance, the trail crossed the river at old Richard's Bridge, and followed it up to the celebrated Red Buttes, crossing the Willow Creeks to the Sweet Water, thence past the Cold Springs, where, three feet under the sod, on the hottest day of summer, ice can be found; thence to the Hot Springs and the Rocky Ridge, and through the Rocky Mountains and Echo Canyon, and thence on to the great Salt Lake Valley.

Nothing occurred on the trip to delay or give us any trouble whatever, until the train struck the South Platte River. One day we camped on the same ground where the Indians had surprised the cattle herd in charge of the McCarthy brothers. It was with difficulty that we discovered any traces of anybody ever having camped there before, the only landmark being the single grave, now covered with grass, in which we had buried the three men who had been killed. The country was alive with buffaloes, and having a day of rare sport, we captured ten or twelve head of cattle, they being a portion of the herd which had been stampeded by the Indians two months before. The next day we pulled out of the camp, and the train was strung out to a considerable length along the road which ran near the foot of the sand hills two miles from the river. Between the road and the river we saw a large herd of buffaloes grazing quietly, they having been down to the stream for a drink.

Just at this time we observed a party of returning Californians coming from the West. They too noticed the buffalo herd, and in another moment they were dashing down upon them, urging their steeds to the greatest speed. The buffalo herd stampeded at once, and broke down the hills. So hotly were they pursued by the hunters that about five hundred of them rushed through our train pell-mell, frightening both men and oxen. Some of the wagons were turned clear around, and many of the terrified oxen attempted to run to the hills, with the heavy wagons attached to them. Others turned around so short that they broke the wagon tongues off. Nearly all the teams got entangled in their gearing, and became wild and unruly, so that the perplexed drivers were unable to manage them.

The buffaloes, the cattle, and the drivers were soon running in every direction, and the excitement upset nearly everybody and everything. Many of the cattle broke their yokes and stampeded. One big buffalo bull became entangled in one of the heavy wagon chains, and it is a fact that in his desperate efforts to free himself he not only actually snapped the strong chain in two, but broke the ox yoke to which it was attached, and the last seen of him he was

running toward the hills with it hanging from his horns. A dozen other equally remarkable incidents happened during the short time that the frantic buffaloes were playing havoc with our train, and when they got through and left us our outfit was badly crippled and scattered. This caused us to go into camp and spend a day in replacing the broken tongues and repairing other damages, and gathering up our scattered ox teams.

The next day we rolled out of camp, and proceeded on our way toward the setting sun. Everything ran along smoothly with us from that point until we came within about eighteen miles of Green River, in the Rocky Mountains, where we camped at noon.

At this place we had to drive our cattle about a mile and a half to a creek to water them. Simpson, his assistant George Wood, and myself, accompanied by the usual number of guards, drove the cattle over to the creek, and while on our way back to camp we suddenly observed a party of twenty horsemen rapidly approaching us. We were not yet in view of our wagons, as a rise of ground intervened, and therefore we could not signal the trainmen in case of any unexpected danger befalling us. We had no suspicion, however, that we were about to be trapped, as the strangers were white men. When they had come up to us, one of the party, who evidently was the leader, rode out in front, and said,

“How are you, Mr. Simpson?”

“You’ve got the best of me, sir,” said Simpson, who did not know him.

“Well, I rather think I have,” coolly replied the stranger, whose words conveyed a double meaning, as we soon learned. We had all come to a halt by this time, and the strange horsemen had surrounded us. They were all armed with double-barreled shotguns, rifles, and revolvers. We also were armed with revolvers, but we had no idea of danger, and these men, much to our surprise, had “got the drop” on us, and had covered us with their weapons, so that we were completely at their mercy. The whole movement of corralling us was done so quietly and quickly that it was accomplished before we knew it.

“I’ll trouble you for your six-shooters, gentlemen,” now said the leader.

“I’ll give ’em to you in a way you don’t want,” replied Simpson.

The next moment three guns were leveled at Simpson. “If you make a move you are a dead man,” said the leader.

Simpson saw at a glance that he was taken at a great disadvantage, and thinking it advisable not to risk the lives of the party by any rash act on his part, he said, “I see now that you have the best of me; but who are you, anyhow?”

“I am Joe Smith,” was the reply.

“What! the leader of the Danites?” asked Simpson.

“You are correct,” said Smith, for he it was.

“Yes,” said Simpson, “I know you now; you are a spying scoundrel.”

Simpson had good reason for calling him this, for only a short time before this Joe Smith had visited our train in the disguise of a teamster, and had remained with us two days. He suddenly disappeared, no one knowing where he had gone or why he had come among us. But it was all explained to us, now that he had returned with his Mormon Danites. After they had disarmed us, Simpson asked,

“Well, Smith, what are you going to do with us?”

“Ride back with us and I’ll soon show you,” said Smith.

(**Note**) *The Danites were a fraternal organization founded by Latter Day Saint members in June 1838, in the town of Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri. During their period of organization in Missouri, the Danites operated as a vigilante group and took a central role in the events of the 1838 Mormon War. There is no evidence that the Danites existed after 1838. However, they remained an important part of Mormon and non-Mormon folklore, polemics, and propaganda for the remainder of the 19th century, waning in ideological prominence after Utah gained statehood.*

We had no idea of the surprise which awaited us. As we came upon the top of the ridge from which we could view our camp, we were astonished to see the remainder of the trainmen disarmed and stationed in a group, and surrounded by another squad of Danites, while other Mormons were searching our wagons for such articles as they wanted.

“How is this?” inquired Simpson. “How did you surprise my camp without a struggle? I can’t understand it?”

“Easily enough,” said Smith. “Your men were all asleep under the wagons, except the cooks, who saw us coming, and took us for returning Californians or emigrants, and paid no attention to us until we rode up and surrounded your train. With our arms covering the men, we woke them up, and told them all they had to do was to walk out and drop their pistols, which they saw was the best thing they could do under circumstances over which they had no control, and you can just bet they did it.”

“And what do you propose to do with us now?” asked Simpson.

“I intend to burn your train,” said he. “You are loaded with supplies and ammunition for Sidney Johnston, and as I have no way to convey the stuff to my own people, I’ll see that it does not reach the United States troops.”

“Are you going to turn us adrift here?” asked Simpson, who was anxious to learn what was to become of himself and his men.

“No; I am hardly as bad as that. I’ll give you enough provisions to last you until you can reach Fort Bridger,” replied Smith. “And as soon as your cooks can get the stuff out of the wagons you can start.”

“On foot?” was the laconic inquiry of Simpson.

“Yes, sir,” was the equally short reply.

“Smith, that’s too rough on us men. Put yourself in our place, and see how you would like it,” said Simpson. “You can well afford to give us at least one wagon and six yokes of oxen to convey us and our clothing and provisions to Fort Bridger. You’re a brute if you don’t do this.”

“Well,” said Smith, after consulting a minute or two with some of his company, “I’ll do that much for you.”

The cattle and the wagon were brought up according to his orders, and the clothing and provisions were loaded on.

“Now you can go,” said Smith, after everything had been arranged.

“Joe Smith, I think you are a mean coward to set us afloat in a hostile country without giving us our arms,” said Simpson, who had once before asked for the weapons, and had had his request denied.

Smith, after further consultation with his comrades, said: “Simpson, you are too brave a man to be turned adrift here without any means of defense. You shall have your revolvers and guns.”

Our weapons were accordingly handed over to Simpson, and we at once started for Fort Bridger, knowing that it would be useless to attempt the recapture of the train.

When we had traveled about two miles we saw the smoke arising from our old camp. The Mormons, after taking what goods they wanted and could carry off, had set fire to the wagons, many of which were loaded with bacon, lard, hardtack, and other provisions, which made a very hot, fierce fire, and the smoke to roll up in dense clouds. Some of the wagons were loaded with ammunition, and it was not long before loud explosions followed in rapid succession. We waited and witnessed the burning of the train, and then pushed on to Fort Bridger. Arriving at this post, we learned that two other trains had been captured and destroyed in the same way by the Mormons. This made seventy-five wagonloads, or four hundred and fifty thousand pounds of supplies, mostly provisions, which never reached General Johnston’s command, to which they had been consigned.

After reaching the fort, it being far in November, we decided to spend the winter there, with about four hundred other employés of Russell, Majors & Waddell, rather than attempt a return, which would have exposed us to many dangers and the severity of the rapidly approaching winter. During this period of hibernation, however, the larders of the commissary became so depleted that we were placed on one-quarter rations, and at length, as a final resort, the poor, dreadfully emaciated mules and oxen were killed to afford sustenance for our famishing party. Fort Bridger being located in a prairie, all fuel there used had to be carried for a distance of nearly two miles, and after our mules and oxen were butchered, we had no other recourse than to carry the wood on our backs or haul it on sleds—a very tedious and laborious alternative.

Starvation was beginning to lurk about the post when spring approached, and but for the timely arrival of a westward-bound train loaded with provisions for Johnston's army, some of our party must certainly have fallen victims to deadly hunger. The winter finally passed away, and early in the spring, as soon as we could travel, the civil employés of the government, with the teamsters and freighters, started for the Missouri River, the Johnston expedition having been abandoned.

On the way up we stopped at Fort Laramie, and there met a supply train bound westward. Of course we all had a square meal once more, consisting of hardtack, bacon, coffee, and beans. I can honestly say that I thought it was the best meal that I had ever eaten; at least I relished it more than any other, and I think the rest of the party did the same.

On leaving Fort Laramie, Simpson was made brigadier wagon master, and was put in charge of two large trains, with about four hundred extra men who were bound for Fort Leavenworth. When we came to Ash Hollow, instead of taking the usual trail over to the South Platte, Simpson concluded to follow the North Platte down to its junction with the South Platte. The two trains were traveling about fifteen miles apart, when one morning, while Simpson was with the rear train, he told his assistant wagon master George Wood and myself to saddle up our mules, as he wanted us to go with him and overtake the head train.

We started off at about eleven o'clock, and had ridden about seven miles, when, while we were on a big plateau back of Cedar Bluffs, we suddenly discovered a band of Indians coming out of the head of the ravine half a mile distant, and charging down upon us at full speed. I thought that our end had come this time. Simpson, however, was equal to the occasion, for with wonderful promptness he jumped from his jaded mule, and in a trice shot his own animal and ours also, and ordered us to assist him to jerk their bodies into a triangle. This being quickly done, we got inside the barricade of mule-flesh, and were prepared to receive the Indians.

We were each armed with a Mississippi yager and two revolvers, and as the Indians came swooping down on our improvised fort, we opened fire with such good effect that three fell dead at the first volley.

(**Note**) *The Mississippi rifle was the first standard U.S. military rifle to use a percussion lock system. Percussion lock systems were much more reliable and weatherproof than the flintlock systems that they replaced, and were such an improvement that many earlier flintlock rifles and muskets were later converted to percussion lock systems.*

This caused them to retreat out of range, as with two exceptions they were armed with bows and arrows, and therefore to approach near enough to do execution would expose at least several of them to certain death. Seeing that they could not take our little fortification or drive us from it, they circled around several times, shooting their arrows at us. One of these struck George Wood in the left shoulder, inflicting only a slight wound, however, and several lodged in the bodies of the dead mules; otherwise they did us no harm. The Indians finally galloped off to a safe distance, where our bullets could not reach them, and seemed to be holding a council. This was a lucky move for us, for it gave us an opportunity to reload our guns and pistols and prepare for the next charge of the enemy. During the brief cessation of hostilities Simpson extracted the arrow from Wood's shoulder, and put an immense quid of tobacco on the wound. Wood was then ready for business again. The Indians did not give us a very long rest, for with another desperate charge, as if to ride over us, they came dashing toward the mule barricade. We gave them a hot reception from our yagers and revolvers. They could not stand or understand the rapidly repeating fire of the revolver, and we checked them again. They circled around us once more, and gave us a few parting shots as they rode off, leaving behind them another dead Indian and a horse.

For two hours afterward they did not seem to be doing anything but holding a council. We made good use of this time by digging up the ground inside the barricade with our knives, and throwing the loose earth around and over the mules, and we soon had a very respectable fortification. We were not troubled any more that day, but during the night the cunning rascals tried to burn us out by setting fire to the prairie. The buffalo grass was so short that the fire did not trouble us much, but the smoke concealed the Indians from our view, and they thought they could approach to us without being seen. We were aware of this, and kept a sharp lookout, being prepared all the time to receive them. They finally abandoned the idea of surprising us. Next morning, bright and early, they gave us one more grand charge, and again we "stood them off." They then rode away half a mile or so, and formed a circle around us. Each man dismounted and sat down, as if to wait and starve us out. They had evidently seen the advance train pass on the morning of the previous day, and believed that we belonged to that outfit, and were trying to overtake it. They had no idea that another train was on its way after us.

Our hopes of escape from this unpleasant and perilous situation now depended upon the arrival of the rear train, and when we saw that the Indians were going to besiege us instead of renewing their attacks, we felt rather confident of receiving timely assistance. We had expected that the train would be along late in the afternoon of the previous day, and as the morning wore away we were somewhat anxious and uneasy at its nonarrival.

At last, about ten o'clock, we began to hear in the distance the loud and sharp reports of the big bull-whips, which were handled with great dexterity by the teamsters, and cracked like rifle shots. These were welcome sounds to us, as were the notes of the bagpipes to the besieged garrison at Lucknow when the re-enforcements were coming up, and the pipers were heard playing "The Campbells are Coming."

In a few moments we saw the head wagon coming slowly over the ridge which had concealed the train from our view, and soon the whole outfit made its appearance. The Indians observed the approaching train, and assembling in a group, they held a short consultation. They then charged upon us once more, for the last time, and as they turned and dashed away over the prairie, we sent our farewell shots rattling after them. The teamsters, seeing the Indians and hearing the shots, came rushing forward to our assistance, but by that time the Indians had almost disappeared from view. The teamsters eagerly asked us a hundred questions concerning our fight, admired our fort, and praised our pluck. Simpson's remarkable presence of mind in planning the defense was the general topic of conversation among all the men.

When the teams came up we obtained some water and bandages with which to dress Wood's wound, which had become quite inflamed and painful, and we then put him into one of the wagons. Simpson and myself obtained a remount, bade good-by to our dead mules which had served us so well, and after collecting the ornaments and other plunder from the dead Indians, we left their bodies and bones to bleach on the prairie. The train moved on again, and we had no other adventures, except several exciting buffalo hunts on the South Platte near Plum Creek.

The Pony Express Rider

AT the time when the Civil War broke out Cody was too young to enlist. No regiment would take him, and besides, his mother, who was in feeble health and who had all the family to look out for, begged and prayed him to stay at home, as she said it was more important for him, the man of the family, to watch over them than to put his services at his country's disposal. The boy wanted to go. It was a natural contingency for a young man brought up as he had been brought up. Yet he gave up his ambition for his mother. Bill promised his mother that he would never go to war as long as she was alive, but that as he must do something to earn money, he had to go to work at once. His chance came with an opportunity to join a group of men who will be read about as long as there is any history of the United States. Their work only lasted a few years, but it was so extraordinary, so exciting, so near to the ideal of a life of adventure, that it stands out more important than many an era in this country's history which had greater results and extended over a longer time.

The firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, who have already been mentioned, increased in importance because they were the only men who carried out on a large scale successfully the business of transporting freight across the desert and the mountains to California. But as California grew—and it grew very fast in a few years—there came a demand for a speedier method of communication between the Western frontier in the East and the Eastern frontier in the West. Those two thousand miles of waste land consumed a month or more when transportation was by means of bull trains. It did not matter very much with freight, but in the transportation of money, of letters, of business arrangements that time grew to be too long for advancing civilization.

The great freight transporters, therefore, conceived the idea of getting up a scheme for carrying a few letters at a much faster rate from St. Joseph to San Francisco by means of a single horseman riding a pony at full speed. Their idea was that a man should mount a swift pony, well tried for his endurance before starting; that this man should ride fifteen miles straight out into the desert, and that at the end of the fifteen miles there should be a station, a house with a couple of men in it, who would have another pony ready. The horseman was to ride up to this shanty, jump to the ground with his bag of letters, immediately jump on the fresh pony, and rush along another fifteen

miles to a similar station. Some of these stations were in settlements, some were in towns, but most of them were on the bleak prairies or in the hills of the Rocky Mountains. The trail was the same as that used by the freight bull trains. The bull-train stations were of course used, but it was necessary to increase the number of stations. Some of the divisions were longer than others. But the average was a distance of forty-five miles; that is, the man who rode one of these divisions of the two thousand miles, rode fifteen miles on one pony, fifteen miles on the second, and fifteen miles on the third. Then he began his return trip of forty-five miles. The longest division was two hundred and fifty miles.

Sometimes the country was open and moderately easy for riding. Sometimes it was up rocky gulches or through forests where the riding was hard. It required in the men the hardest kind of physique and endurance, in the ponies surefootedness as well as swiftness. Sometimes in order to keep up the schedule the men were obliged to cover twenty-five miles in an hour on flat country, in order to make up for slower going in the hills. They received about one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, which was very high pay. But that gave the promoters of the scheme their choice among the best men of the frontier.

The letters were carried in mail pouches or bags that hung over the saddle, and no rider was allowed to carry more than twenty pounds. In order to get as much mail within the twenty pounds as possible letters were written on tissue paper. Whatever money was carried was in paper, and one Eastern newspaper printed a special edition on tissue paper for use only on this famous Pony Express. So in the twenty pounds there were hundreds of letters. In fact, the paper was so thin that even a hundred letters would not occupy a space larger than that occupied by an ordinary monthly magazine today. The mail pouches were waterproof, and once locked at St. Joseph, Missouri, they were not opened until they were delivered in Sacramento, California, two thousand miles away.

It seems almost incredible, but that distance was covered in a time that was extraordinarily short for those days, when one remembers that the whole journey was made by running ponies. It was an exciting time when the first pony was ready and saddled at the offices of Russell, Majors & Waddell, in St. Joseph. A large crowd gathered long before the appointed time for starting, and when the pony was brought forth he was greeted with cheers. At the exact moment a frontiersman came out of the office, threw the pouch over the saddle, leaped on the pony, and started off at the top speed the pony was capable of, followed by the cries and cheers of the crowd. This first trip was started on the 3d of April, 1860. That journey, where the mail bags were thrown across the ponies and carried by a number of riders, took ten days to do the two thousand miles. It was an average of two hundred miles a day, or between eight and nine miles an hour for every hour of the twenty-four for ten days,

including all stops and all delays. But in a short time the average trip was made regularly in nine days, and the fastest trip was made when President Lincoln's inaugural address was carried over the two thousand miles in seven days and seventeen hours.

When Cody was looking for work he conceived the idea of enlisting as one of the Pony Express riders, and he went to the office of the company and asked if he could not be one of the riders. They told him that he was too young, as he was then only a little over fourteen. But he insisted he could do it, and finally they gave him the shortest trip, a ride of thirty-five miles with three changes of ponies.

When the time came for him to be ready for the first trip the boy was outside of his station with his pony ready, looking across the prairie for the rider who was to bring the mail pouches from the next station. Close upon time the man appeared. Drawing up to the station he jumped off, threw the bag to Cody, who in turn leaped into his saddle with it and started on his fifteen miles. He reached his first station on time, dismounted, and mounted a fresh pony which was standing ready, and started on the second relay. And so with the third, until he finished his thirty-five miles and threw the bag to the next man, who was waiting. And within an hour he was ready again for the rider coming from the direction of San Francisco. As soon as he had the mail he mounted a fresh pony and rode back over the same thirty-five miles.

Thus the boy did seventy miles every day for three months. But endurance was not the only quality the rider must have. Through most of the whole route there was constant danger of a "hold up" either from Indians or from outlaws, who knew that the bag frequently contained money. He must be as alert and as good a frontiersman in the knowledge of Indian warfare as he was a good horseman. It was some time before the boy had any incident other than the ordinary episodes of the long ride. However, the time came.

He was riding as fast as his pony could go through a ravine one day when there sprang out in front of him in the narrow track a man with his rifle at his shoulder. Young Cody knew enough to know that the man had what was called the "drop" on him. There was nothing to do but pull up and await events. It was a white man—a desperado of the plains. He told the boy that he meant him no harm, but that he wanted the money in the bag. Cody could do nothing but sit quietly on his pony. But always alert, always on the watch for every opportunity, in a situation that, young as he was, he had been in many times before, he kept a keen eye on the man while appearing to submit. The outlaw was careless enough to approach the pony from the front, and as he got within reach the young horseman by a trick that he had used many times before made the pony rear so suddenly that his fore foot struck the man in the head and knocked him senseless.

Bill knew that somewhere in the vicinity the highwayman had a horse. He at once dismounted, bound the man hand and foot while he was insensible, and then began to hunt for the horse in the bushes. He found him a few rods away, and when he got back his opponent had come to. Unbinding his legs, Bill forced him to mount his own horse, and then strapped him on. Although the young Pony Expressman was late at the next station, the fact that he had brought in a robber and had saved his mail pouch was quite sufficient excuse for the delay of the mail that day.

At the end of a few months the work proved too severe for him to continue, and he was laid off as supernumerary—that is, a man who could be called on to ride in any emergency. It was not long, however, before he made application for another job on the Pony Express. He went to Fort Laramie and looked up a man named Slade, who was agent of the line there. Slade told him he was too young, but on hearing his name he slapped him on the shoulder and said that he had heard of him before and that he would give him a job.

This run was from Red Buttes to a place called Three Crossings, and the distance was seventy-six miles. The boy started running this route regularly each day, and for a time had no unusual experience. One day, however, having made the run out of seventy-six miles, he found, when he arrived at his last station, that the man who was supposed to carry the bag to the next station, a distance of eighty-five miles, had been wounded by Indians.

Bill offered to go on and carry the bag over that man's section, and as there was no one else to do it he was sent on. This second division covered a distance of one hundred and sixty-one miles. That made one continuous route of three hundred and twenty-two miles out and back without stopping. In that time he rode twenty-one ponies and made the longest trip ever made by a Pony Express rider.

It was while on this route that one day he suddenly came upon a man who appeared from behind a large rock as Cody passed. There was no time for thought, and Bill immediately reached for his revolver, but upon seeing him the man dropped his rifle and came forward. He turned out to be a famous character of the plains named "California Joe," and on seeing the young boy he immediately asked him if he were not Bill Cody. Then the frontiersman told him that a little way back on the road he had what he called "a little misunderstandin' with two men, and now I has to plant 'em."

Moses Embree “California Joe” Milner

*(**Note**) Moses Embree Milner, also known as California Joe was a mountain man, miner, and army scout. Milner was born in Stanford, Kentucky, on May 8, 1829. He left home when he was just 14-years-old and headed west to become a mountain man. He soon made his way to St. Louis, Missouri where*

he joined a party of fur trappers headed for Fort Laramie, Wyoming. The youngest of the group, he would learn quickly. Just a year later, he would be with a group of American Fur Company trappers out of Fort Laramie when they tangled with Blackfoot warriors camped by the Powder River. In the battle, he was said to have killed three of the warriors. The adventurous young man was described as a colorful character who was large in stature, with unkempt long hair and a heavy red beard, who was usually sporting a black sombrero and a briar pipe in his mouth. Usually, he preferred riding a mule to a horse and was rarely without his plains rifle. He was an overly talkative and humorous storyteller, had a penchant for drink, and would later be described, by none other than George Custer, as a "dingy-looking briarwood." When the Mexican-American War erupted in 1846, he was working as a scout for General Stephen W. Kearny and Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan. After the war, he was reportedly captured by Ute Indians in 1849 but soon escaped. Milner returned home on his 21st birthday, where he married 13-year-old Nancy Watts with whom he would have four children. The couple honeymooned by crossing nearly 2,000 miles of prairie and mountains in a wagon trip to prospect for gold in California. Though he wouldn't spend much time there, it was here that he earned the nickname of "California Joe." He was moderately successful, and in 1853, established a 645-acre cattle ranch in near Corvallis, Oregon.

It was only a little later that, as Bill left one of the stations, the boss called to him to look out, there were reports of Indians in the vicinity. Cody said he would, and started away at breakneck pace. Here again, as many times before and after, the boy's instinctive knowledge and immediate perception of anything, no matter how small, that was unusual or unnatural on the plains saved his life. Always keeping a keen watch, he suddenly saw above the top of a pile of rocks something that he knew was not put there by nature. It was a little speck of color, and long before any average human being would have seen it at all he knew that it was a feather in the headdress of an Indian in war paint. He did not stop or turn. He kept on at his furious pace until he was within rifle shot. Then ducking behind his pony, he turned him instantly off the trail, and at the same moment a puff of smoke from behind the rock showed that his guess had been true. The bullet went where the rider should have been, but it missed by the swerve which he had caused the pony to make. Out sprang two warriors, and a party of Indians appeared from a little distance further away. And now it became a ride for life. As he approached the end of the valley, which narrowed into a point, he saw that some of the Indians on the slopes were riding down to cut off his track. He watched his opportunity, and luckily for him those Indians had no rifles. He saw them fit the arrows to their bows, waited for the right moment, and just before the leading Indian fired his arrow the boy shot him with his revolver. When he reached the next station he found that his pony had two arrows sticking in its flesh.

At this time the Pony Express had to be stopped for some time on account of the number of Indians who were lying in wait all along the trails to capture the riders, and so the boy was once more out of a job.

He became a supernumerary again, and as there were days in which he had nothing to do, he was in the habit of going out hunting, selling the skins of the animals he shot. On one of these trips he came upon a group of horses tied near a stream, and hearing voices in a dugout cave near by, he went to investigate. It turned out that the men were a group of prairie ruffians. They supposed him to be an advance scout in search of themselves, and for a few moments there was a quick play of wit against wit.

They asked him where he came from. He pointed backward. They asked where his horse was. He said it was down by the stream. They asked him to go and get it and join them. He said he would, volunteering, with the keenness of men whose lives are always at stake, to leave his gun with them. That allayed suspicion for the moment, but they even went so far as to send two of their number with him. The boy, as they reached the horse, carelessly said that he had shot some game and would pick it up, in the meantime asking the men to lead his horse on ahead. Then turning behind the second man, he struck him a blow with his revolver and shot the other. Mounting his pony, Cody then dashed down the ravine. In a moment the whole party were after him. It was certain that he would soon be overtaken, as his own pony was tired and theirs were fresh. Bill turned the corner of some rocks and, dismounting, gave the pony a slap and sent him tearing down the ravine, while he himself hid in the bushes and watched the whole party tear by in the pursuit of the riderless horse. He then calmly walked back to the station at Horseshoe and told of the adventure. Such experiences as this followed one after another, until in 1863, with the Civil War in full progress, Cody, then seventeen years old, received word that his mother was dying. He went immediately to their home, and arrived in time to see his mother before she died.

It was a sad household that gathered together after the burial, and when the children talked over what they should do, they were astonished to hear that Cody had made up his mind to enlist at once in the Northern army. He had kept his word with his mother and had not become a soldier as long as she lived; but now that she was dead and the family homestead out of debt, he was free from all promises.

He at once enlisted, and his regiment was soon ordered to the front, but the young man was so able as a scout that he soon came to be used on special duty. Then, too, his fame as a plainsman was well known, and it reached military headquarters long before he himself arrived. He was at once selected, therefore, as a bearer of military dispatches at Fort Larned, and one of his first escapades took place soon after he was put upon this work. Some of the Southerners bore a grudge against him that dated back to the time when he

had saved his father from them. These men—now on the Southern side—heard of his journey and laid in ambush by a stream in a gulch where it was necessary for him to cross on account of the ford. They hid their horses in a clump of trees and went to a cabin near the ford to wait for his arrival. Darkness came on before he reached the spot, and as by this time the young man had acquired the habit of absolutely observing everything at all times about him, he soon discovered the fresh tracks of horses. Without any other object than the natural instinct to find the reason for everything that presented itself, he quietly dismounted, followed the trail, and found the five horses. It was evident that there were five men near by watching for him.

The only thing to do was to ride on as quietly as possible and try to make the ford. He was in the act of entering the water when he heard their cries, and, urging his horse into the stream, he turned in his saddle, and before any of the five could pull a trigger he had shot one of them. Still he spurred the horse on, turned again and shot another. But the others were firing now, and so Cody fell forward across his horse and was lucky enough to make the other side of the stream. There he was safe, because the other three were not mounted.

When the scout returned with answers to the dispatches he became very wary as he approached the ford. There were no signs, however, of an attacking party, and, coming up to the shanty, he found one of the men whom he had shot dying there alone. The man had been left by his pals with enough food to last him until he should die, and Bill discovered that he was a man whom he had known from his earliest boyhood, and who had been a supposed friend of his father. As the man was near his end, the boy gave him water and sat by him until he died. He then returned to Fort Larned.

(**Note**) *Larned, Kansas and the fort that was constructed there are named in honor of Colonel Benjamin F. Larned, the paymaster general of the United States Army at the time the post was established. The Camp on Pawnee Fork was established on October 22, 1859 to protect traffic along the Santa Fe Trail from hostile American Indians. It was renamed Camp Alert in 1860, as the small garrison of about 50 men had to remain constantly alert for Indians. In May 1860 it was moved upstream, 3 miles (4.8 km) 30 miles to the west up the Pawnee Fork, and by the end of the month was renamed Fort Larned. It served the same purpose as Camp Alert and as an agency for the administration of the Central Plains Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the terms of the Fort Wise Treaty of 1861. The fort's service ended as a combination of the tribes' relocation to reservations and the completion of railroads across Kansas that ended the need for the Santa Fe Trail.*

“Bill Cody, the Scout”

WITH his entrance into the United States army “Bill Cody,” as he had come to be known, arrived at man’s estate, although he was scarcely eighteen years of age. He was known not only all over the West, but every army headquarters knew of the skillful frontiersman, and even at that early date most boys of the United States had read some part of his life in the newspapers.

Now his work became that of a man, and he had plenty of narrow escapes during the war, which in their way were as remarkable as his experiences on the plains. For example, once General Smith, who was in charge of headquarters at Memphis, got hold of him and told him that he wished to get some information and have some maps drawn of the position of the Confederate troops; and that it was impossible to secure this unless he could find a man who would go into the Confederate camp in disguise. Cody immediately consented to go. It did not seem any more dangerous or any less honorable than carrying out the regular life of a scout and Indian hunter of the plains.

Just before the trip he had captured a man whom he knew, but who sided with the Southerners—a man named Nat Golden, who had been one of Russell, Majors & Waddell’s freightmen. On this man he found some dispatches, which he promptly read. Golden was such an old friend that Cody took the papers from him, and when the man was arrested, nothing being found on him to make him a spy, he was simply imprisoned. Bill never told. With these papers in his possession and dressed in the Confederate uniform, the spy entered the Confederate lines, after telling General Smith what was in the dispatches.

He was, of course, immediately halted by the pickets, to whom he stated that he was a Confederate soldier with information for the general. After being disarmed he was taken to General Forrest, and a conversation then took place in which Cody told Forest that Golden had been captured, and that as he was being taken prisoner he had handed Cody the dispatches, asking him to take them to General Forrest. The story seemed so plausible that the General allowed him to stay in camp. And for two days he kept his eyes open, drew plans, and was ready to leave, when he came near losing his presence of mind, as well as his life, by discovering General Forrest talking with Golden himself, who had escaped from the Union lines. He knew that there was no time for delay. Golden, having no idea that Cody was in the Confederate lines, would

tell Forrest the whole story as it actually happened, and the General would at once have him arrested. He went, therefore, apparently in great calmness, to his tent, got his horse saddled, and rode quietly toward the picket line. No one suspected that anything was the matter. No one paid any attention to him. As he got to the picket the sergeant spoke to him, recognized him, and allowed him to pass.

He was outside the lines—in fact, he was between the Union and the Confederate lines—when he heard the sound of a squad of cavalry approaching. Then he put his horse to the run and in a moment discovered that a troop of Confederate cavalry was approaching from behind to meet a troop of Union cavalry approaching from the front. The one thought a spy was escaping; the other thought that a deserter or a spy was approaching. It was a hard situation. Fortunately, he got into some timber, and as he came out on the other side he discovered the Union lines. But it was not safe for him to approach in Confederate uniform, and so, with the knowledge that the Confederate cavalry was looking for him in the woods, Cody calmly dismounted at the spot where he had left his uniform, changed his clothes, and was able to lay his maps and report before General Smith within forty-eight hours from the time he had left.

After some further experiences with the force at the front, Cody was assigned to duty at St. Louis. Office work palled on him, however, and he soon procured his release, as the war was practically over. He then returned to Fort Leavenworth and looked again for a job. This time it turned out to be the work of driving the famous overland stage which ran from St. Joseph to Sacramento, doing the two thousand miles in nineteen days on the average. This stage was another of the enterprises of the great firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell. It was a difficult enterprise, too. The stage frequently carried large sums of money, and was therefore frequently held up by desperadoes or Indians.

No one seemed very anxious to undertake the work of driver, although it was well paid. And the now famous Indian scout saw his opportunity again of making relatively large sums of money by taking risks that few others would take. He was at once offered the opportunity on his application, and started driving the coach for what was called a division—that is, two hundred and fifty miles.

Those were strange old coaches. One of them may be seen to-day by any boy who will go to Buffalo Bill's famous Wild West Show and watch the old Deadwood coach drive around the ring. They were large-wheeled wagons swung on braces. They had to be strong, for they went over the most frightful roads one can imagine. Passengers could ride inside or on top, and every one who traveled went as fully armed as he could. There never was a time in the night or day when the coach was not apt to be attacked. And if it were attacked, the

man on the box was the first one shot. Cody's run was from Fort Kearny to Plum Creek, and he drove six horses. When he took hold of the job he was warned that Indians were all about, and rumors came thicker and thicker in the first month of his driving.

Nothing happened, however, with the exception of one trip, where he saved the coach and the lives of all in it by a daring rush through a stream in the face of a party of Indians. But shortly after this he was told by the division superintendent, as he left Fort Kearny, that in the coach was a very large amount of money being sent in a box to Plum Creek. It was a question whether the existence of this treasure had become known or not. At any rate, Cody said he would be on the watch. First, before mounting on the box, he looked over the passengers—and here again was the same habit of looking at everything and everybody that might have any relation to the situation. He did not like the looks of two of the passengers, and as the conductor, who always traveled with the driver on the trip, was suddenly prevented from going, his suspicions became keener.

Again the keen boy decided that the thing to do was to take time by the forelock. He had proceeded only a part of the distance after all but the two passengers had left when he pulled up the coach and got down as if to examine the running gear. Then he asked the two men to help him. As they started to come out of the coach Cody pointed two revolvers at them and held them up in the most approved fashion. He made them throw out their revolvers, then bound them and put them back in the coach. Something that one of the men had said made him think that they were part of a gang, the other members of which were somewhere in ambush along the trail. On reaching the first relay station he deposited his prisoners with the agent and then started on.

There were no other passengers. He had no sooner gotten away from the station than, stopping again, he cut open one of the cushions of the coach, and taking the money from the box, put it inside the cushions and then patched up the opening. After that he remounted the box and rode on.

Within an hour, while driving through a bit of timber, the expected happened. The coach was held up by half a dozen men. They started to look for the treasure. Cody told them a long story of two men who had been riding as passengers, who had held him up in a lonely spot, taken the treasure, and disappeared into the timber. The gang immediately recognized their confederates, and in a fury at being thus deceived, they waited only long enough to ask him if they were mounted. On receiving an answer that they were not and also a description of the direction they had taken, the highwaymen left him in peace and rode in hot haste after their confederates.

And the driver of the overland stage finished his journey and deposited the treasure into the hands that it was intended for.

The Indian Campaigns with the Army

ANYONE who will read the history of the United States after the Civil War will come upon a long series of campaigns of the United States army in the West against the American Indians. These Indians, as has already been said, constantly being more and more confined, had now only the great American desert and the Rocky Mountains to live upon. They existed there in enormous numbers. They hunted the almost limitless herds of buffalo and deer. They fought, whenever opportunity offered, whatever white men came upon them. The attempt of the government was to give the Indians certain territories on which they could live in different parts of that country. These territories were called Indian reservations, and some of them still exist; but at that time—that is, between 1870 and 1880—the Indians were still in their native wild civilization, and declined to be limited to these reservations.

They had no desire to become farmers. They wanted to roam over the plains, and hunt, and fish, and live as they were born to live. They could not be made like white men. And hence the result was a series of campaigns which gradually exterminated most of them and killed the spirit of the others. One of these campaigns was the famous fight of General Custer, whose command was practically annihilated in the famous battle of Little Big Horn. Here again the qualities of Cody came into great demand. He was one of the greatest scouts in these Indian campaigns. His experiences, his fights, would number into the hundreds in a short decade. General Sheridan, who was put in command of the troops to quell the Indian uprising, made him the chief of his scouts, and during these years he was constantly at work leading the American troops against the Indians.

Some time before he had acquired the name which now every boy in this country and almost every boy in the civilized world knows him by—"Buffalo Bill"—and the story of how this name was given to him is well worth the telling.

Cody had always been a great shot—not only an accurate, but a wonderfully quick shooter. This skill and quickness had saved his life many times. When he was not at work at some specific duty he would hunt buffaloes, riding forth over the plains on a horse he had trained to hunt. As a herd of buffaloes—and there were hundreds of them—was seen approaching some camp where Cody was, he would mount his horse, throw the reins on his neck, and sit quietly

while the animal ran diagonally toward the herd at full speed, selected of his own will the last of the herd, and worked with all his keen, nervous ability until he brought his rider close alongside the shaggy animal. There is but one spot that is very vulnerable in a buffalo. You may shoot a dozen times and hardly wound him, but if one shot reaches the vital spot, the animal drops dead in his tracks. Again and again the men of the plains have seen Cody start out on his horse and within a few minutes from the firing of the first shot drop ten or a dozen of the wild beasts of the prairie.

The story of how the name of Buffalo Bill came to be given to him by common consent is this: There was a man named William Comstock who had been called by his friends "Buffalo Bill" because he was such a successful buffalo hunter. When he heard that Cody was being called "Buffalo Bill" too, he disputed his right to that title. Cody heard of it, and told some of the officers of the army post that if there was any dispute, he for one was willing to settle it by an actual contest in buffalo killing. Comstock was as game as Cody, and accepted the challenge. And so the plainsmen arranged the contest.

They settled upon a huge tract of prairie near Sheridan, Kansas, and when the appointed day arrived everybody who could reach the spot came to witness the contest. Officers, soldiers, railroadmen, scouts, pioneers, and all the inhabitants of that country gathered in a large crowd. Judges were appointed and the two claimants to the title were on hand. It was an easy matter in those days and in that place to find a herd of buffaloes, so that within an hour after the start they had sighted a herd and started for the hunt.

As soon as the herd was sighted the two men separated, each working on his own account and getting all the buffaloes he could. Cody killed thirty-eight, to twenty-three for Comstock, and the sight of sixty-one buffaloes lying dead upon the plain must have been a terrible one.

Then they had a gala lunch, and in the afternoon started again. And then the final crowning feat was apparent. In the second contest Cody, in order to leave no doubt of the matter, rode his horse without either saddle or bridle, and even then he killed eighteen to the other's fourteen. From that time on to this day no one has questioned his right to the title of "Buffalo Bill."

It would be impossible here to go into the many episodes that occurred while Bill, under the title of Colonel William F. Cody, was chief of the United States Army Scouts. It is only possible to say that in that capacity he not only made it possible for the United States army to accomplish a work impossible without scouts who had been brought up in that kind of fight, but it is safe to say that if General Custer had had him with him, the frightful massacre of Little Big Horn would never have occurred. But in all that time Buffalo Bill was at work upon his chosen profession, with the exception of a short time when, against his will, he was made a justice of the peace.

Named “Buffalo Bill” after contract with army for buffalo meat

Rounding Up Indians

IN October, 1867, General Sheridan organized an expedition to operate against the Indians in the Republican River region. “Cody,” said he, “I have decided to appoint you as guide and chief of scouts with the command. How does that suit you?”

“First rate, General, and thank you for the honor,” I replied, as gracefully as I knew how.

The Dog Soldier Indians were a band of Cheyennes and unruly, turbulent members of other tribes, who would not enter into any treaty, or keep a treaty if they made one, and who had always refused to go upon a reservation. They were a warlike body of well-built, daring, and restless braves, and were determined to hold possession of the country in the vicinity of the Republican and Solomon rivers. They were called “Dog Soldiers” because they were principally Cheyennes—a name derived from the French chien, a dog.

On the 3d of October the Fifth Cavalry arrived at Fort Hays. General Sheridan, being anxious to punish the Indians who had lately fought General Forsyth, did not give the regiment much of a rest, and accordingly on the 5th of October it began its march for the Beaver Creek country. The first night we camped on the south fork of Big Creek, four miles west of Hays City. By this time I had become pretty well acquainted with Major Brown and Captain Sweetman, who invited me to mess with them on this expedition, and a jolly mess we had. There were other scouts in the command besides myself, and I particularly remember Tom Renahan, Hank Fields, and a character called “Nosey,” on account of his long nose.

The next day we marched thirty miles, and late in the afternoon we came into camp on the south fork of the Solomon. At this encampment Colonel Royal asked me to go out and kill some buffaloes for the boys.

“All right, Colonel; send along a wagon or two to bring in the meat,” I said.

“I am not in the habit of sending out my wagons until I know that there is something to be hauled in; kill your buffaloes first, and then I’ll send out the wagons,” was the Colonel’s reply. I said no more, but went out on a hunt, and after a short absence returned and asked the Colonel to send out his wagons over the hill for the half-dozen buffaloes I had killed.

The following afternoon he again requested me to go out and get some fresh buffalo meat. I didn't ask him for any wagons this time, but rode out some distance, and coming up with a small herd I managed to get seven of them headed straight for the encampment, and instead of shooting them just then, I ran them at full speed right into the camp, and then killed them all, one after another, in rapid succession. Colonel Royal witnessed the whole proceeding, which puzzled him somewhat, as he could see no reason why I had not killed them on the prairie. He came up rather angrily, and demanded an explanation.

"I can't allow any such business as this, Cody," said he. "What do you mean by it?"

"I didn't care about asking for any wagons this time, Colonel, so I thought I would make the buffaloes furnish their own transportation," was my reply. The Colonel saw the point in a moment, and had no more to say on the subject.

A three days' uninteresting march brought us to Beaver Creek, where we were camped, and from which point scouting parties were sent out in different directions. None of these, however, discovering Indians, they all returned to camp about the same time, finding it in a state of great excitement, it having been attacked a few hours previously by a party of Indians, who had succeeded in killing two men and in making off with sixty horses belonging to Company H.

That evening the command started on the trail of these Indian horse thieves, Major Brown with two companies and three days' rations pushing ahead in advance of the main command. Being unsuccessful, however, in overtaking the Indians, and getting nearly out of provisions—it being our eighteenth day out—the entire command marched toward the nearest railway point, and camped on the Saline River, distant three miles from Buffalo Tank. While waiting for supplies we received a new commanding officer, Brevet Major General E. A. Carr, who was the senior major of the regiment, and who ranked Colonel Royal. He brought with him the celebrated Forsyth scouts, who were commanded by Lieutenant Pepoon, a regular army officer.

The next morning, at an early hour, the command started out on a hunt for Indians. General Carr, having a pretty good idea where he would be most likely to find them, directed me to guide them by the nearest route to Elephant Rock on Beaver Creek. Upon arriving at the south fork of the Beaver on the second day's march, we discovered a large fresh Indian trail, which we hurriedly followed for a distance of eight miles, when suddenly we saw on the bluffs ahead of us quite a large number of Indians.

General Carr ordered Lieutenant Pepoon's scouts and Company M to the front. This company was commanded by Lieutenant Schinosky, a Frenchman

by birth and reckless by nature. Having advanced his company nearly a mile ahead of the main command, about four hundred Indians suddenly charged down upon him and gave him a lively little fight, until he was supported by our full force. The Indians kept increasing in numbers all the while, until it was estimated that we were fighting from eight hundred to one thousand of them. The engagement became quite general, and several were killed and wounded on each side. The Indians were evidently fighting to give their families and village a chance to get away. We had undoubtedly surprised them with a larger force than they had expected to see in that part of the country. We fought them until dark, all the time driving them before us. At night they annoyed us considerably by firing down into our camp from the higher hills, and several times the command was ordered to dislodge them from their position and drive them back.

After having returned from one of these sallies, Major Brown, Captain Sweetman, Lieutenant Bache, and myself were taking supper together, when "whang!" came a bullet into Lieutenant Bache's plate, breaking a hole through it. The bullet came from the gun of one of the Indians, who had returned to the high bluff overlooking our camp. Major Brown declared it was a crack shot, because it broke the plate. We finished our supper without having any more such close calls.

At daylight next morning we struck out on the trail, and soon came to the spot where the Indians had camped the day before. We could see that their village was a very large one, consisting of about five hundred lodges; and we pushed forward rapidly from this point on the trail which ran back toward Prairie Dog Creek. About two o'clock we came in sight of the retreating village, and soon the warriors turned back to give us battle. They set fire to the prairie grass in front of us and on all sides in order to delay us as much as possible. We kept up a running fight for the remainder of the afternoon, and the Indians repeatedly attempted to lead us off the track of their flying village; but their trail was easily followed, as they were continually dropping tepee-poles, camp-kettles, robes, furs, and all heavy articles belonging to them. They were evidently scattering, and it finally became difficult for us to keep on the main trail. When darkness set in we went into camp, it being useless to try to follow the Indians after nightfall.

Next morning we were again on the trail. The Indians soon scattered in every direction, but we followed the main trail to the Republican River, where we made a cut-off, and then went north toward the Platte River. We found, however, that the Indians by traveling night and day had got a long start, and the General concluded that it was useless to follow them any farther.

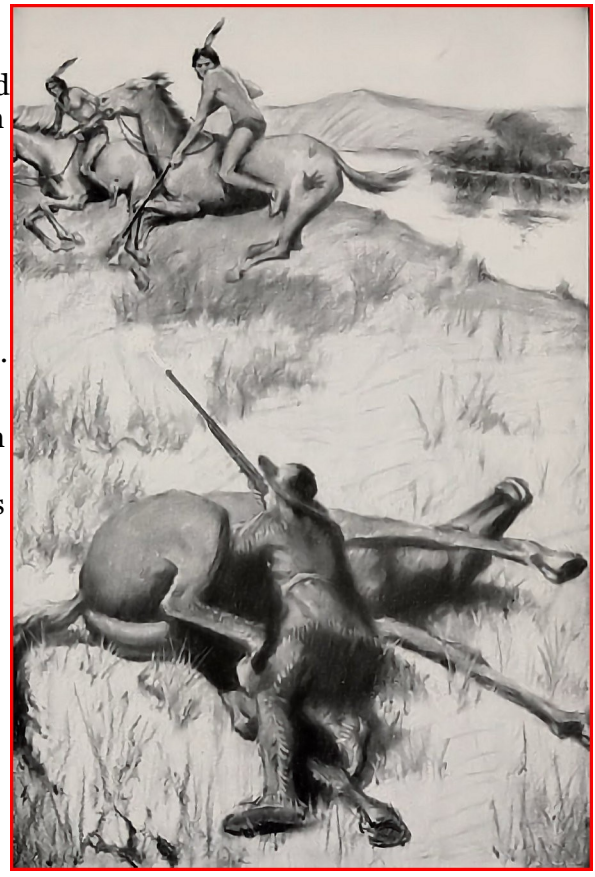
The General told me that the next day's march would be toward the headwaters of the Beaver, and asked me the distance. I replied that it was about twenty-five miles, and he said he would make it the next day. Getting an early

start in the morning, we struck out across the prairie, my position as guide being ahead of the advance guard. About two o'clock General Carr overtook me, and asked me how far I supposed it was to water. I thought it was about eight miles, although we could see no sign or indication of any stream in front.

"Pepoon's scouts say you are going in the wrong direction," said the General; "and in the way you are bearing it will be fifteen miles before you can strike any of the branches of the Beaver; and that when you do, you will find no water, for the Beavers are dry at this time of the year at that point."

"General, I think the scouts are mistaken," said I, "for the Beaver has more water near its head than it has below; and at the place where we will strike the stream we will find immense beaver dams, large enough and strong enough to cross the whole command, if you wish."

"Well, Cody, go ahead," said he; "I'll leave it to you; but remember that I don't want a dry camp."



"No danger of that," said I; and then I rode on, leaving him to return to the command. As I had predicted, we found water seven or eight miles farther on, where we came upon a beautiful little stream, a tributary of the Beaver, hidden in the hills. We had no difficulty in selecting a good halting-place, and obtaining fresh spring water and grass.

The General, upon learning from me that the stream—which was only eight or nine miles long—had no name, took out his map and located it, and named it Cody's Creek, which name it still bears. We pulled out early next morning for the Beaver, and when we were approaching the stream I rode on ahead of the advance guard in order to find the crossing. Just as I turned a bend of the creek, "bang!" went a shot, and down went my horse—myself with him. I disentangled myself, and jumpedbehind the dead body.

Looking in the direction whence the shot had come I saw two Indians, and at once turned my gun loose on them, but in the excitement of the moment I missed my aim. They fired two or three more shots, and I returned the compliment, wounding one of their horses.

On the opposite side of the creek, going over the hill, I observed a few lodges moving rapidly away, and also some mounted warriors, who could see me, and who kept blazing away with their guns. The two Indians who had fired at me, and had killed my horse, were retreating across the creek on a beaver dam. I sent a few shots after them to accelerate their speed, and also fired at the ones on the other side of the stream.

I was undecided as to whether it was best to run back to the command on foot or hold my position. I knew that within a few minutes the troops would come up, and I therefore decided to hold my position. The Indians, seeing that I was alone, turned, and charged down the hill, and were about to recross the creek to corral me, when the advance guard of the command put in an appearance on the ridge, and dashed forward to my rescue. The Indians whirled and made off.

When General Carr came up, he ordered Company I to go in pursuit of the band. I accompanied Lieutenant Brady, who commanded, and we had a running fight with the Indians, lasting several hours. We captured several head of their horses and most of their lodges. At night we returned to the command, which by this time had crossed the creek on the beaver dam.

We scouted for several days along the river, and had two or three lively skirmishes. Finally our supplies began to run low, and General Carr gave orders to return to Fort Wallace, which we reached three days afterward, and where we remained several days.

Very soon after, General Carr received orders from General Sheridan for a winter's campaign in the Canadian River country, instructing him to proceed at once to Fort Lyon, Colorado, and there to fit out for the expedition. Leaving Fort Wallace in November, 1868, we arrived at Fort Lyon in the latter part of the month without special incident, and at once began our preparations for invading the enemy's country. General Penrose had left his post three weeks previously with a command of some three hundred men. He had taken no wagons with him, and his supply train was composed only of pack mules. General Carr was ordered to follow with supplies on his trail and overtake him as soon as possible.

I was particularly anxious to catch up with Penrose's command, as my old friend Wild Bill was among his scouts. We followed the trail very easily for the first three days, and then we were caught in Freeze-Out Canyon by a fearful snowstorm, which compelled us to go into camp for a day. The ground now being covered with snow, we found it would be impossible to follow Penrose's

trail any farther, especially as he had left no sign to indicate the direction he was going. General Carr sent for me, and said that as it was very important that we should not lose the trail, he wished that I would take some scouts with me, and while the command remained in camp, push on as far as possible, and see if I could not discover some traces of Penrose or where he had camped at any time.

Accompanied by four men, I started out in the blinding snowstorm, taking a southerly direction. We rode twenty-four miles, and upon reaching a tributary of the Cimarron, we scouted up and down the stream for a few miles, and finally found one of Penrose's old camps. It was now late in the afternoon, and as the command would come up the next day, it was not necessary for all of us to return with the information to General Carr. So riding down into a sheltered place in the bend of the creek, we built a fire and broiled some venison from a deer which we had shot during the day, and after eating a substantial meal, I left the four men there while I returned to bring up the troops.

It was eleven o'clock at night when I got back to the camp. A light was still burning in the General's tent, he having remained awake, anxiously awaiting my return. He was glad to see me, and was overjoyed at the information I brought, for he had great fears concerning the safety of General Penrose.

The command took up its march next day for the Cimarron, and had a hard tramp of it on account of the snow having drifted to a great depth in many of the ravines, and in some places the teamsters had to shovel their way through. We arrived at the Cimarron at sundown, and went into camp.

Upon looking around next morning, we found that Penrose, having been unencumbered by wagons, had kept on the west side of the Cimarron, and the country was so rough that it was impossible for us to stay on his trail with our wagons; but knowing that we would certainly follow down the river, General Carr concluded to take the best wagon route along the stream, which I discovered to be on the east side. Before we could make any headway with our wagon train we had to leave the river and get out on the divide.

We were very fortunate that day in finding a splendid road for some distance, until we were all at once brought to a standstill on a high tableland, overlooking a beautiful winding creek that lay far below us in the valley. The question that troubled us was how we were to get the wagons down. We were now in the foothills of the Rattoon Mountains, and the bluff we were on was very steep.

"Cody, we're in a nice fix now," said General Carr.

"Oh, that's nothing," was my reply.

"But you can never take the train down," said he.

“Never you mind the train, General. You say you are looking for a good camp. How does that beautiful spot down in the valley suit you?” I asked him.

“That will do. I can easily descend with the cavalry, but how to get the wagons down there is a puzzler to me,” said he.

“By the time you are located in your camp, your wagons shall be there,” said I.

“All right, Cody, I’ll leave it to you, as you seem to want to be boss,” he replied, pleasantly. He at once ordered the command to dismount and lead the horses down the mountain side. The wagon train was a mile in the rear, and when it came up one of the drivers asked, “How are we going down there?”

“Run down, slide down, or fall down; any way to get down,” said I.

“We can never do it; it’s too steep; the wagons will run over the mules,” said another wagon master.

“I guess not; the mules have got to keep out of the way,” was my reply.

I told Wilson, the chief wagon master, to bring on his mess wagon, which was at the head of the train, and I would try the experiment at least. Wilson drove the team and wagon to the brink of the hill, and following my directions he brought out some extra chains with which we locked the wheels on each side, and then rough-locked them.

We now started the wagon down the hill. The wheel horses—or rather the wheel mules—were good on the hold back, and we got along finely until we nearly reached the bottom, when the wagon crowded the mules so hard that they started on a run and galloped down into the valley and to the place where General Carr had located his camp. Three other wagons immediately followed in the same way, and in half an hour every wagon was in camp, without the least accident having occurred. It was indeed an exciting sight to see the six mule teams come straight down the mountain and finally break into a full run. At times it looked as if the wagons would turn a somersault and land on the mules.

This proved to be a lucky march for us, as far as gaining on Penrose was concerned; for the route he had taken on the west side of the stream turned out to be a bad one, and we went with our immense wagon train as far in one day as Penrose had in seven. His command had marched on to a plateau or high tableland so steep that not even a pack mule could descend it, and he was obliged to retrace his steps a long way, thus losing three days’ time, as we afterward learned.

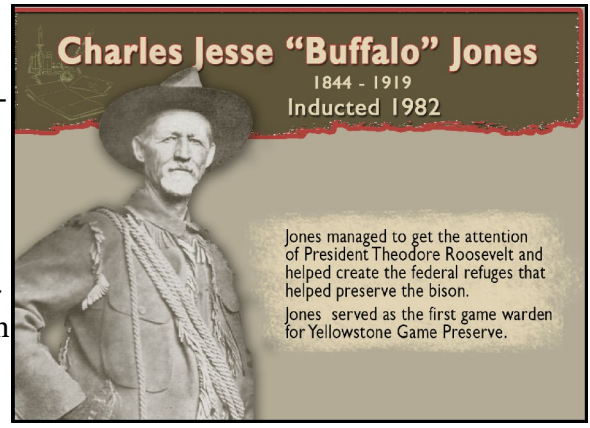
BUFFALO BILL
WHEN THE WEST WAS WILD

Buffalo Bill and His Show

There were many exciting expeditions as a guide for the army and other adventures. But now, we fast forward to his Wild West show.

In December 1872, Cody traveled to Chicago to make his stage debut with his friend Texas Jack Omohundro in The Scouts of the Prairie, one of the original Wild West shows produced by Ned Buntline. The handsome performer was a hit with the sold-out crowds.

In 1873, Cody invited "Wild Bill" Hickok to join the group in a new play called Scouts of the Plains. Hickok did not enjoy acting and often hid behind scenery; in one show, he shot at the spotlight when it focused on him. Therefore, he was released from the group after a few months. Cody founded the Buffalo Bill Combination in 1874, in which he performed for part of the year while scouting on the prairies the rest of the year. The troupe toured for ten years. Cody's part typically included a reenactment of an 1876 incident at Warbonnet Creek, where he claimed to have scalped a Cheyenne warrior.



In 1883, in the area of North Platte, Nebraska, Cody founded Buffalo Bill's Wild West, a circus-like attraction that toured annually. With his show, Cody traveled throughout the United States and Europe and made many contacts. He stayed, for instance, in Garden City, Kansas, in the presidential suite of the former Windsor Hotel. He was befriended by the mayor and state representative, a frontier scout, rancher, and hunter named Charles "Buffalo" Jones. In 1886, Cody and Nate Salsbury, his theatrical manager, entered into partnership with Evelyn Booth (1860–1901), a big-game hunter and scion of the aristocratic Booth family.

It was at this time Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band was organized. The band was directed by William Sweeney, a cornet player who served as leader of the Cowboy Band from 1883 until 1913. Sweeney handled all of the musical arrangements and wrote a majority of the music performed by the Cowboy Band.

In 1893, Cody changed the title to Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World. The show began with a parade on horseback, with participants from horse-culture groups that included the US and another military, cowboys, American Indians, and performers from all over the world in their best attire. Turks, gauchos, Arabs, Mongols and Georgians displayed their distinctive horses and colorful costumes. Visitors would see main events, feats of skill, staged races, and sideshows. Many historical western figures participated in the show. For example, Sitting Bull appeared with a band of 20 of his braves.

Cody's headline performers were well known in their own right. Annie Oakley and her husband, Frank Butler, were sharpshooters, together with the likes of Gabriel Dumont and Lillian Smith. Performers re-enacted the riding of the Pony Express, Indian attacks on wagon trains, and stagecoach robberies.

The show was said to end with a re-enactment of Custer's Last Stand, in which Cody portrayed General Custer, but this is more legend than fact. The finale was typically a portrayal of an Indian attack on a settler's cabin. Cody would ride in with an entourage of cowboys to defend a settler and his family. This finale was featured predominantly as early as 1886 but was not performed after 1907; it was used in 23 of 33 tours.

Another celebrity appearing on the show was Calamity Jane, as a storyteller as of 1893. The show influenced many 20th-century portrayals of the West in cinema and literature.

With his profits, Cody purchased a 4,000-acre ranch near North Platte, Nebraska, in 1886. The Scout's Rest Ranch included an eighteen-room mansion and a large barn for winter storage of the show's livestock. In 1887, invited by the British businessman, John Robinson Whitley, Cody took the show to Great Britain in celebration of the Jubilee year of Queen Victoria, who attended a performance. It played in London and then in Birmingham and Salford, near Manchester, where it stayed for five months.

In 1889, the show toured Europe, and in 1890 Cody met Pope Leo XIII. On March 8, 1890, a competition took place. Buffalo Bill had met some Italian butteri (a less-well-known sort of Italian equivalent of cowboys) and said his men were more skilled at roping calves and performing other similar actions.

A group of Buffalo Bill's men challenged nine butteri, led by Augusto Imperiali [it], at Prati di Castello neighbourhood in Rome. The butteri easily won the competition. Augusto Imperiali became a local hero after the event: a street and a monument were dedicated to him in his hometown, Cisterna di Latina, and he was featured as the hero in a series of comic strips in the 1920s and 1930s.

Cody set up an independent exhibition near the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, which greatly contributed to his popularity in the United States. It vexed the promoters of the fair, who had rejected his request to participate.

On October 29, 1901, outside Lexington, North Carolina, a freight train crashed into one unit of the train carrying Buffalo Bill's show from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Danville, Virginia. The freight train's engineer had thought that the entire show train had passed, not realizing it was three units, and returned to the tracks; 110 horses were killed in the crash or had to be killed later, including his mounts Old Pap and Old Eagle.

No people were killed, but Annie Oakley's injuries were so severe that she was told she would never walk again. She did recover and continued performing later. The incident put the show out of business for a while, and this disruption may have led to its eventual demise.

In 1908, Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill joined forces and created the Two Bills show. That show was foreclosed on when it was playing in Denver, Colorado.

The Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Film Company, based in New York City, produced a three-reel motion picture in 1912 titled The Life of Buffalo Bill. Cody himself appears in scenes that bookend the short film, a series of adventures presented in flashback as Buffalo Bill's dreams. The film had two other directors before it was successfully completed by John B. O'Brien. The film is in the collection of the Library of Congress.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West tours of Europe

Buffalo Bill's Wild West toured Europe eight times, the first four tours between 1887 and 1892, and the last four from 1902 to 1906. The Wild West first went to London in 1887 as part of the American Exhibition, which coincided with the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, requested a private preview of the Wild West performance; he was impressed enough to arrange a command performance for Queen Victoria. The Queen enjoyed the show and meeting the performers, setting the stage for another command performance on June 20, 1887, for her Jubilee guests. Royalty from all over Europe attended, including the future Kaiser Wilhelm II and the future King George V.

These royal encounters provided Buffalo Bill's Wild West an endorsement and publicity that ensured its success. Also, at this time, Buffalo Bill was presented with written accolades from several of America's high ranking generals including William T. Sherman, Philip H. Sheridan and William H. Emory testifying to his service, bravery, and character. Among the presentations was a document signed by Governor John M. Thayer of Nebraska appointing Cody as aide-de-camp on the Governor's staff with the rank of colonel dated March 8, 1887. The rank had little official authority but the English press quickly capitalized on the new title of "Colonel Cody". Buffalo Bill's Wild West closed its successful London run in October 1887 after more than 300 performances, with more than 2.5 million tickets sold. The tour made stops in Birmingham and Manchester before returning to the United States in May 1888 for a short summer tour.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West returned to Europe in May 1889 as part of the Exposition Universelle in Paris, an event that commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille and featured the debut of the Eiffel Tower. The tour moved to the South of France and Barcelona, Spain, then on to Italy. While in Rome, a Wild West delegation was received by Pope Leo XIII. Buffalo Bill was disappointed that the condition of the Colosseum did not allow it

to be a venue; however, at Verona, the Wild West did perform in the ancient Roman amphitheater. The tour finished with stops in Austria-Hungary and Germany.

In 1891 the show toured cities in Belgium and the Netherlands before returning to Great Britain to close the season. Cody depended on several staffs to manage arrangements for touring with the large and complex show: in 1891 Major Arizona John Burke was the general manager for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Company; William Laugan, supply agent; George C. Crager, Sioux interpreter, considered leader of relations with the Indians; and John Shangren, a native interpreter. In 1891, Buffalo Bill performed in Karlsruhe, Germany, in the Südstadt Quarter. The inhabitants of Südstadt are nicknamed Indianer (German for "American Indians") to this day, and the most accepted theory says that this is due to Buffalo Bill's show. In October Cody brought the show to Dennistoun, Glasgow, where it ran from 16 November until 27 February 1892 in the East End Exhibition Building, and George C. Crager sold The Ghost Shirt to the Kelvingrove Museum.

The show's 1892 tour was confined to Great Britain; it featured another command performance for Queen Victoria. The tour finished with a six-month run in London before leaving Europe for nearly a decade. Buffalo Bill's Wild West returned to Europe in December 1902 with a fourteen-week run in London, capped by a visit from King Edward VII and the future King George V. The Wild West traveled throughout Great Britain in a tour in 1902 and 1903 and a tour in 1904, performing in nearly every city large enough to support it. The 1905 tour began in April with a two-month run in Paris, after which the show traveled around France, performing mostly one-night stands, concluding in December. The final tour, in 1906, began in France on March 4 and quickly moved to Italy for two months. The show then traveled east, performing in Austria, the Balkans, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine, before returning west to tour in Poland, Bohemia (later Czech Republic), Germany, and Belgium. The show was enormously successful in Europe, making Cody an international celebrity and an American icon. Mark Twain commented, "It is often said on the other side of the water that none of the exhibitions which we send to England are purely and distinctly American. If you will take the Wild West show over there you can remove that reproach."

The Wild West brought an exotic foreign world to life for its European audiences, allowing a last glimpse at the fading American frontier.

Life in Cody, Wyoming

In 1895, Cody was instrumental in the founding of the town of Cody, the seat of Park County, in northwestern Wyoming. Today the Old Trail Town museum is at the center of the community and commemorates the traditions of Western life. Cody first passed through the region in the 1870s. He was so impressed by the development possibilities from irrigation, rich soil, grand scenery, hunting, and proximity to Yellowstone Park that he returned in the mid-1890s to start a town. Streets in the town were named after his associates: Beck, Alger, Rumsey, Bleistein, and Salsbury. The town was incorporated in 1901. In November 1902, Cody opened the Irma Hotel, named after his daughter. He envisioned a growing number of tourists coming to Cody on the recently opened Burlington rail line. He expected that they would proceed up Cody Road, along the north fork of the Shoshone River, to visit Yellowstone Park. To accommodate travelers, Cody completed the construction of the Wapiti Inn and Pahaska Tepee in 1905 along Cody Road with the assistance of the artist and rancher Abraham Archibald Anderson.

Cody established the TE Ranch, located on the south fork of the Shoshone River about thirty-five miles from Cody. When he acquired the TE property, he stocked it with cattle sent from Nebraska and South Dakota. The new herd carried the TE brand. The late 1890s were relatively prosperous years for the Wild West show, and he bought more land to add to the ranch. He eventually held about eight thousand acres of private land for grazing operations and ran about a thousand head of cattle. He operated a dude ranch, pack-horse camping trips, and big-game hunting business at and from the TE Ranch. In his spacious ranch house, he entertained notable guests from Europe and America.

Buffalo Bill Cody died on January 10, 1917. He was baptized in the Catholic Church the day before his death by Father Christopher Walsh of the Denver Cathedral. He received a full Masonic funeral. Upon the news of Cody's death, tributes were made by King George V, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and President

Woodrow Wilson. His funeral service was held at the Elks Lodge Hall in Denver. The governor of Wyoming, John B. Kendrick, a friend of Cody, led the funeral procession to the cemetery.

At the time of his death, Cody's once-great fortune had dwindled to less than $100,000. He left his burial arrangements with his wife. She said that he had always said he wanted to be buried on Lookout Mountain, which was corroborated by their daughter Irma, Cody's sisters, and family friends. But other family members joined the people of Cody in saying that he should be buried in the town he founded.

On June 3, 1917, Cody was buried on Lookout Mountain, in Golden, Colorado, west of Denver, on the edge of the Rocky Mountains, overlooking the Great Plains. His burial site was selected by his sister Mary Decker.

The author at Buffalo Bill's Gravesite
Lookout Mountain west of Denver

About the Author

Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.

As a wrangler on the "Great American Horse Drive", at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.

His book, "The Oldest Greenhorn", chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the "Gate-to-Gate" trophy belt buckle the hard way.

Other books published by Larry W Jones:

A Squirrel Named Julie and The Fox Ridge Fox
The Painting Of A Dream
The Boy With Green Thumbs and The Wild Tree Man
Red Cloud – Chief Of the Sioux
Spotted Tail – The Orphan Negotiator
Little Crow – The Fur Trapper's Patron
Chief Gall – The Strategist
Crazy Horse – The Vision Quest Warrior
Sitting Bull - The Powder River Power
Rain-In-The-Face – The Setting Sun Brave
Two Strike – The Lakota Club Fighter
Chief American Horse – The Oglala Councilor
Chief Dull Knife – The Sharp-Witted Cheyenne
Chief Joseph – Retreat From Grande Ronde
The Oregon Trail Orphans
Kids In Bloom Volume 1
Kids In Bloom Volume 2
Kids Animal Pals Volume 1
Kids Animal Pals Volume 2
Bird Kids Volume 1
Bird Kids Volume 2
Garden Kids Volume 1
Garden Kids Volume 2
Folklore Of Jackson Hole
Henny Penny Meets Chicken Little
Delightful Stories For Children
The 1825 Voyage Of HMS Blonde
Illustrated Stories For Young Children
Sea Sagas – Perilous Voyages
Songbirds And Their Stories
The Jungle Book – Mowgli's Brothers
The Jungle Book – Kaa's Hunting
The Jungle Book – Tiger! Tiger!
The Jungle Book – The White Seal
The Jungle Book – Rikki-Tikki-Tavi
The Jungle Book – Toomai of the Elephants
The Jungle Book – Her Majesty's Servants
The Oldest Greenhorn – Second Edition
Life On The Mississippi
Songs Of The Seas
Treasure Island
The Wind In The Willows

Other books published by Larry W Jones:

Alice In Wonderland
Peter Rabbit
The Secret Garden
Heidi
Cynthia Ann Parker – Comanche Bride
Black Beauty
The Call Of the Wild
Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea
The Goodnight-Loving Trail – A Chuckwagon Saga
Ode To Toulee – From Gosling To Goose
China Clipper – Floatplanes Of Pan Am
Images Of Old England
Range Of A Cowboy
Clipper Ships – Emigrants Passage
Clipper Ships – Wool and Wealth
Clipper Ships – Iron Maidens
Clipper Ships – The Kiwi Connection
Chief War Eagle – Peacemaker Of The Sioux
Ohiyesa – From Sioux To Surgeon
Indian Ways Of Yore – Fables And Fact
Heritage Of An Indian Boy
Daniel Boone On the Cumberland Trail
Davy Crockett Of the Wild Frontier
Jim Bowie – Life Legacy Legend
Sam Houston – Tennessee To Texas
Shackleton – Polar Quest
Death Valley Days – The Manly Trail
Pocahontas – Powhatan Princess
Tecumseh – The Roaming Cherokee
Hunga Tonga – The Volcano!
Otaheite 1769 – Log Of Captain Cook
How Texas Got Its Shape
First Nations – Eskimo
Pontiac and the Ottawa Wars
Last Of The Wampanoag
Osceola And The Seminole Sorrow
Squanto – The Patuxet Pilgrim
Wreck Of the Charles Eaton
Courthouses Of Texas
Mother Goose Rhymes – The Complete Collection
English Gardens – The Estates

Other books published by Larry W Jones:

Log Of Captain Bligh – Mutiny and Survival
Four Voyages Of Christopher Columbus
Expedition Of Cabeza de Vaca
Expedition Of Hernando de Soto
Expedition Of Coronado
Billy the Grizzly
Kidnapped – The Inheritance
Animal Friends Of the Timberlands
Chief Red Jacket – The Orator
Chief Black Hawk – Sauk Clan Leader
The Pied Piper Of Hamelin
How Polynesia Became French
Texas Poisonous Snakes
Rocky Mountain Jim From Muggins Gulch

All his publications are available on Lulu.com